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Section 1. Applied Linguistics

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THE REFERENTIAL AND SOCIO-PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF PRONOUNS THAT GENERATE IMPLICIT MEANING IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DISCOURSE

Khanim Ahmadova¹

¹ PhD in Philology, Lecturer, Department of English
Language and Literature, Khazar University

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Abstract

The realisation of implicit content within the language system is not confined to the semantic potential of lexical units, but is also closely connected with the referential and socio-pragmatic functions of pronouns in discourse. Pronouns do not merely replace nominal expressions; their interpretation often depends on contextual, situational and interpersonal knowledge shared by communicators. The choice between personal, demonstrative, indefinite and other pronominal forms may signal social distance, group affiliation, inclusion or exclusion, evaluation and the speaker's attitude without expressing these meanings explicitly. From this perspective, pronouns constitute an important linguistic mechanism through which implicit meaning emerges at the intersection of reference, discourse structure and pragmatic intention. Their interpretation therefore requires the addressee to identify not only the intended referent but also the social and communicative implications encoded indirectly through pronominal choice.

Keywords: *implicit meaning, syntactic implicitness, syntactic structure, context, presupposition*

Introduction

The distinction between explicit and implicit content in Russian scholars' approaches to implicit information is likewise not limited to the formal expression of the linguistic sign. Drawing on K. A. Dolinin's position, the authors define implicitness as information that is not directly expressed in a text by linguistic signs but is inferred from the

utterance constructed through those signs. This idea is formulated as follows: "Implicitness is that part of information which is not explicitly expressed in a text by linguistic signs, but which is intended in the utterance formed on the basis of those signs and is derived from the utterance in the process of interpretation" (Anikeeva and Balashova, 2020, p. 182). A position that more clearly

demonstrates the independent role of the syntactic level in the formation of implicit meaning is attributed to I. Y. Chernukhina. Anikeeva and Balashova present her view as follows: “Implicit content is formed at the compositional-syntactic level as a result of a particular arrangement of textual components. The interaction between the meanings of these components leads to the emergence of new semantics that is not formally expressed at the lexical level” (Anikeeva and Balashova, 2020, p. 183).

Literature Review

Previous studies approach implicit meaning from psycholinguistic, semantic, pragmatic and textual perspectives. Anikeeva and Balashova (2020) emphasise that implicit information may arise through the compositional and syntactic organisation of textual components, while İsmayılǵı demonstrates that implicit affirmation can be verbalised through syntactic as well as lexical, semantic and morphological means. Mammadli et al. relate meaning interpretation to textual integrity and intersentential relations, whereas Rzayeva and Yusifova highlight the role of background knowledge, context, ellipsis, zero anaphora and presupposition in reconstructing unexpressed information.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to determine how implicit meaning is formed and interpreted through syntactic means. Its main objectives are to identify syntactic structures capable of conveying non-explicit content, to examine the role of ellipsis, word-order variation, rhetorical questions, parcellation and syntactic non-expression, and to clarify how context, presupposition and the addressee’s background knowledge contribute to the reconstruction of implicit meaning.

Materials and Methods

The material of the study consists of linguistic and psycholinguistic research on implicit meaning, text linguistics and syntactic-pragmatic interpretation, including scholarly articles, monographs and dissertation abstracts in Azerbaijani and Russian. The study employs descriptive-analytical, functional-semantic, contextual and pragmatic meth-

ods. Theoretical positions are comparatively synthesised in order to establish the relationship between syntactic structure, textual context and inferential meaning without introducing material not supported by the analysed sources.

Main part

The particular importance of the syntactic level lies in the fact that hidden information often emerges from the relationship between what is expressed and what remains unexpressed. A component of an utterance may be omitted, another may be moved to the initial position, the ordinary syntactic sequence may be altered, or a sentence may formally belong to one communicative type while serving a different communicative purpose. In such cases, the addressee reconstructs the full content of the utterance by relating the information provided by its syntactic form to the context and communicative situation. As İsmayılǵı notes, “*For the functional-semantic category of affirmation, implicit and explicit types of affirmation may be distinguished. Such affirmation is verbalised by lexical, semantic, morphological and syntactic means*” (İsmayılǵı, 2022, p. 10). In İsmayılǵı’s approach, implicit affirmation is presented as a form of meaning that does not coincide with direct meaning, requires a more complex interpretative process for its comprehension, and is context-dependent. The author particularly emphasises that “*Implicit affirmation is expressed by means that are not overtly manifested at the grammatical levels of language*” (İsmayılǵı, 2022, p. 10). This position provides grounds for regarding syntactic implicitness as an interpretative phenomenon that enables a broader semantic content to be derived from an overt structure. The communicative function of syntactic structure is also manifested in the fact that the formal properties of a sentence type do not always fully correspond to the communicative meaning conveyed. In discussing rhetorical questions, İsmayılǵı points to the simultaneous realisation of “two syntactic meanings” in such constructions: “*In rhetorical questions, two syntactic meanings occur simultaneously. A question and a statement are expressed*” (İsmayılǵı, 2022, p. 10). Syntactic implicitness is not confined to the omission of

a constituent. A number of linguists include, among the specially marked means of creating implicit meaning, not only parcellation but also disruption of the syntactic or logical ordering of utterance components: *“Implicit meaning may be expressed in a text by specially marked devices. These include parcellation as well as disruption of the syntactic or logical ordering of the components of an utterance”* (Anikeeva and Balashova, 2020, p. 185). E. V. Ermakova’s view of implicitness offers a broader perspective on this issue: *“Implicitness is a property of verbal information which actualises for consciousness, and makes perceptible, those relations between units of information that remain latent in other situations, while at the same time creating new relations that linguistic units did not previously possess”* (Ermakova, 2010, p. 21). The reconstructive nature of syntactic implicitness is also related to the integrity of the text. Many linguists emphasise that an individual sentence does not always constitute a complete thought in itself but functions as one predicative link within a broader textual system. Among the principal features of a syntactic whole are *“unity of content, semantic unity, integrity, structural closure and the means of connection emerging in the relationships between components”* (Məmmədli, 2023, p. 3). The distinction between explicit and implicit forms of intratextual connection in A. Rzayeva’s research is also noteworthy in this respect. The author writes: *“Implicit connection refers to a situation in which the content of the idea presented to the reader appears to be concealed within the text, because no formal means are used in expressing that idea; nevertheless, the idea presented in the given text or discourse is understood through the reader’s previously acquired background knowledge or intuition”* (Rzayeva, 2025, p. 17). In the pragmatic analysis of implicit meaning, information derived from context is likewise presented in close connection with syntactic structure. Yusifova’s research notes that in cases of zero anaphora and ellipsis, the referent is not expressed by an overt linguistic form, yet the listener is able to draw an inference on the basis of the context and existing knowledge. Here, syntactic non-expression becomes the starting point for inferential interpretation.

The reconstruction of the unexpressed component is not arbitrary; the preceding part of the text imposes interpretative constraints on the addressee and narrows the range of possible meanings. E. Abdulrahimov’s explanation of the role of presupposition in this process may also be related to syntactic implicitness: *“Information that is not directly mentioned in communication but is understood by the listener as an integral part of it is called presupposition. Presupposition is an extralinguistic factor on which the speaker relies in expressing a thought”* (Abdulrahimov, 2014, p. 69, as cited in Yusifova, 2024, p. 9). Since the speaker assumes that certain information is already known to the addressee, there is no need to express it repeatedly at the syntactic level. Thus, syntactic economy is, on the one hand, a structural phenomenon and, on the other, a pragmatic assumption concerning knowledge shared between the participants in communication.

Results

The analysis shows that syntactic implicitness is not restricted to the omission of sentence constituents but may also arise through non-canonical word order, rhetorical questions, parcellation, ellipsis, zero anaphora and other structurally marked constructions. Implicit content is frequently reconstructed through the interaction of syntactic form with textual context, presupposition and shared background knowledge. The findings also indicate that the interpretative boundaries of implicit meaning may extend beyond an individual sentence, since an unexpressed element can be recovered from preceding or subsequent textual structures.

Conclusion

Implicit meaning verbalised through syntactic means emerges from the interaction between formal structure, textual relations, presupposition, context, and the inferential activity of the addressee. A syntactic construction not only constitutes the overt organisation of an utterance but also determines which information remains unstated, which component is communicatively foregrounded, and which semantic relations must be reconstructed by the addressee. Syntactic implicitness should therefore be

regarded not merely as a property of grammatical form, but as a multi-level phenomenon arising from the interaction between structure and communicative semantics.

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© Ahmadova Kh.
Contact: ahmadova88.khanim@gmail.com



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EXPERIMENTAL-PHONETIC STUDY OF INTONATION IN AZERBAIJANI MUSICAL TEXTS

Ali-Zade (Alekberova)¹, Fidan Faig¹

¹ Faculty of Philology, Baku Eurasian University, Azerbaijan

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Abstract

The article investigates the intonation characteristics of Azerbaijani musical texts using experimental phonetics methods, in particular, the oscillographic analysis method. The main acoustic (intonation) parameters – tempo (duration), intensity and frequency of the main tone – were determined on the basis of the musical texts selected by the author for the purpose of conducting oscillographic research. Within the framework of the study, the syntagma is considered to be as a phonetic-semantic-syntactic whole, which allows us to more accurately trace the movement of the intonation contour within the musical text. The results of the study show that musical intonation is a multicomponent phenomenon that combines several interrelated aspects. In addition, unlike speech, musical melody works with sounds of certain pitch, organized on the basis of interval relations inherent in music, and each melodic sound has its own pitch, rhythmic and intonation properties.

Keywords: *music, intonation, melody, syntagma, phrase unit, intonation organization, rhythmic-melodic parameter*

Introduction

The relationship between language and music has long attracted considerable attention from scholars representing various scientific disciplines. A review of theoretical studies devoted to this issue indicates its multifaceted nature. The scholarly literature addresses such topics as the perception of speech and musical sounds and their impact on the human psyche (Habibova, 2024); the differentiation of emotional nuances in speech and musical expression (Morozov, 2017); the identification of common and specific patterns of speech and musical intonation (Yavorsky, 2022;

Medushevsky, 1994); the determination of the features of music's emotional expressiveness shaped by human speech (Kholopova, 2012); the establishment of the musical basis of speech intonation (Heydarov, et al., 2019); and others. In the present article, the intonational characteristics of music are examined within the framework of intonology, with particular emphasis on the functional role of melody (pitch) as the primary carrier of intonational information. This approach involves the application of structural methods for analyzing the intonational parameters of the vocal realization of musical texts.

It should be noted that the intonational aspect of vocal-artistic genres was initially considered mainly from an aesthetic and philosophical perspective, as well as within studies of the musical organization of artistic speech. At the same time, the principal objective of the experimental-phonetic investigation of musical intonation is to develop a systematic approach to the analysis of the rhythmic and melodic parameters of vocal compositions.

The use of oscillographic analysis methods makes it possible to identify units of the suprasegmental level of language, determine their differential and integral features, and describe vocal forms within a system of musical-phonological categories, taking into account the specific interaction of two intonational systems – the linguistic and the musical.

Methods and Materials

The following methods were employed in the course of the study: auditory analysis, acoustic analysis, oscillographic analysis, as well as methods of generalization and linguistic description. Azerbaijani musical texts representing various genres served as the linguistic material for the investigation. The experimental corpus was represented by the romance “*Without You*” (“*Sənsiz*”). The computer software **Praat** was used to analyze the acoustic parameters of the musical composition, including melodic characteristics (fundamental frequency, F0), intensity, and temporal parameters (duration and sound realization time).

Results and Discussion

As a specific sign system, music serves as a carrier of information conveyed through the intonational, rhythmic, and melodic means of expression. The perception of music is a complex cognitive process involving several interrelated stages, ranging from the physiological perception of an acoustic signal to its semantic interpretation (Amrahova, 2014). For listeners without formal musical training, the perception of a musical composition is largely determined by individual experience, emotional state, and cognitive characteristics. The informational and artistic-expressive potential of music is rooted in its ability to reflect the subtlest manifes-

tations of human intellectual and emotional activity, which are often difficult to express through the means of natural language (Der-gaeva, 2005).

The complexity of any scientific analysis of music stems from its dual nature. On the one hand, music is a cultural phenomenon shaped by historical traditions, national characteristics, social interactions, and collective artistic experience, which necessitates its objective study (Yarovsky, 2022). On the other hand, a musical work exists and is perceived through the listener’s individual experience, determined by personal, cognitive, and emotional factors. It is precisely the interaction between these objective and subjective dimensions that defines the specific nature of the creation, performance, and perception of a musical composition (Gabibova, 2025).

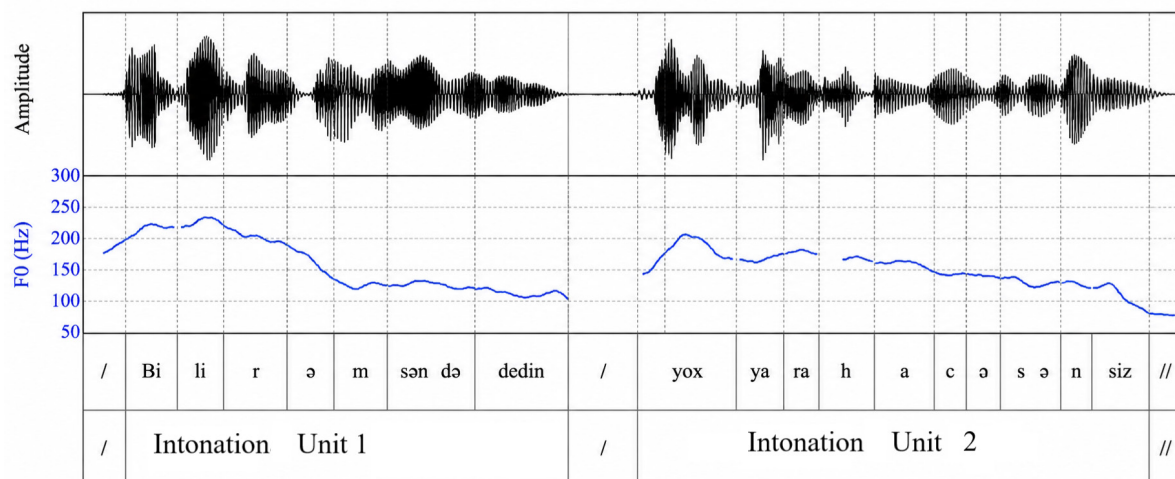
In a musical work, intonation functions as the primary means of expressing artistic content and ensures the transition from conceptual meaning to its acoustic realization. Intonation is a complex multidimensional phenomenon comprising a set of prosodic features, including melody, intensity, duration, accentual structure, rhythm, tempo, timbre, and pause (Veysalli, 1993). The analysis of musical intonation employs the same basic prosodic parameters as the study of speech intonation; however, their realization is governed by the principles of the musical system and the specific features of musical language. According to V.V. Medushevsky, “intonation, in combination with the energies of meaning, constitutes an indivisible whole in all aspects of sound” (Medushevsky, 1994: 33).

The boundaries of a musical phrase are determined primarily by its intonational and rhythmic-musical organization rather than solely by the syntactic structure of the verbal text. The phonetic analysis of the musical text was carried out in several stages: (1) identifying the principal structural unit – the syntagm – as an intonational and melodic whole; (2) determining the syntagmatic parameters of the musical text, including the metrical and rhythmic organization of the phrase; and (3) analyzing the intonational structure of the musical text in terms of fundamental frequency, melodic contour, and their acoustic realization.

In the analysis of the acoustic parameters of the musical text, syntagmatic segmentation was adopted as the primary framework, since dividing an utterance into syntagms allows for the most accurate representation of its phonetic and semantic characteristics. A syntagm is thus viewed as the shortest segment of sounding speech whose isolation does not disrupt its semantic and intonational integrity and which, within a given context, functions as a unified semantic whole. The results of the acoustic analysis revealed that the maximum fundamental frequency (F0) reached 454 Hz, the minimum was 162 Hz, and the mean value was 292 Hz. The maximum intensity level was 76 dB, the minimum was 54 dB, with an average intensity of 65 dB.

The acoustic analysis of the first line of the romance, “Hər gecəm oldu kədər, qüssə, fəlakət” (“Every night of mine was filled with sorrow, grief, and suffering”), showed that the melodic contour begins in the mid-frequency range at approximately 260 Hz, then gradually rises to 283–284 Hz in the middle of the phrase, and finally falls to 230 Hz in its concluding part, thus forming a descending melodic contour. In this segment, the highest fundamental frequency (284 Hz), together with the maximum intensity and duration of sound realization (330 ms), is observed in the final syllable of the word “gecəm,” which is characteristic of the dominant lexical item in the phrase [see Oscillogram 1].

Oscillogram 1.



In this phrase, the maximum intensity is recorded on the first syllable and reaches 72 dB. Combinatory effects are most clearly manifested in the dynamic characteristics of the musical text. For example, in the word “qüssə,” the intensity of the vowel /ü/ in the position preceding the voiceless consonant /s/ is 62 dB, while in the word “fəlakət,” the intensity of the vowel /ə/ in the environment of the consonants /k/ and /t/ reaches 63 dB, which is 7 dB lower than the average intensity value. Toward the end of the line, a decrease in both acoustic parameters is observed. The fundamental frequency (F0) of the vowel in the final syllable is 230 Hz, while the intensity level is 60 dB. In the phrase “*Hər nəfəs çəkdim, hədər getdi o saat səniz*” (“Every breath I took was in vain; that hour passed

without you”), the melodic parameter is characterized by values above the mid-frequency range, averaging approximately 290 Hz. The relatively high fundamental frequency in the cadential position is conditioned by the presence of the vowel /i/ in the final syllable, situated between a voiceless and a voiced consonant; its frequency value is 229 Hz. The maximum intensity is recorded at the beginning of the syntagm and reaches 71 dB.

The most significant differences were observed in the temporal parameter. At the initial stage of performance, the rate of articulation is relatively fast (151 ms and 126 ms), whereas toward the end of the phrase the duration of the vowels /e/ and /i/ increases considerably. The duration of the vowel /e/ is 469 ms, while the vowel /i/ in the closed

syllable reaches 380 ms, indicating a slowing of the temporal organization of the vocal phrase in its final section.

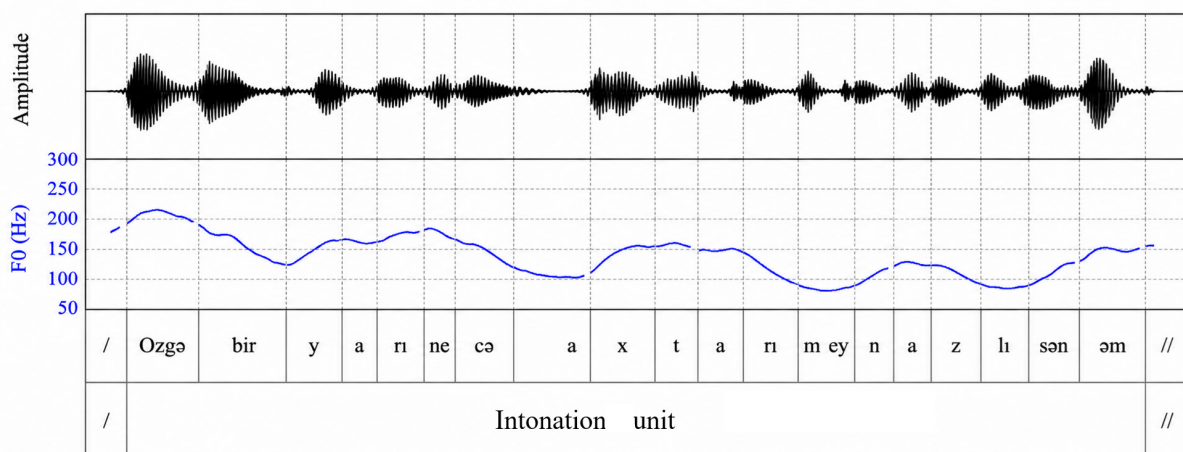
In the phrase “*Özgə bir yarı necə axtarım, ey nazlı sənəm*” (“How can I seek another beloved, O graceful beloved?”), variations in the fundamental frequency (F0) are observed across different segments of the melodic line. In the initial part of the phrase, an increase in frequency values occurs in the second and third syllables of the word “*axtarım*,” where the acoustic measurements are 338 Hz and 347 Hz, respectively. In the middle section of the phrase, the fundamental frequency decreases to 224–230 Hz, whereas in the final section, in the word “*nazlı*,” the values rise again to 341 Hz and 307 Hz.

A similar acoustic pattern is observed in the analysis of intensity parameters. The maximum intensity value within the phrase is re-

cord on the first vowel of the word “*yarı*” and amounts to 73 dB, whereas the minimum value is found on the vowel /i/ in the final syllable, where the intensity decreases to 58 dB. Overall, this syntagm is characterized by a relatively smooth and gradual melodic contour: no abrupt intervals, sharp rises, or steep falls are observed between the maximum and minimum fundamental-frequency values.

The longest duration is registered for the vowel /a/ in the first open syllable of the word “*yarı*,” reaching 385 ms. It should be noted that the intensity of vowel sounds within a word is determined by their articulatory and phonetic characteristics. This regularity is also preserved in vocal performance, since the acoustic properties of sounds in a musical composition are likewise influenced by their phonetic nature (Habibova, 2014: 78) [see Oscillogram 2].

Oscillogram 2.



The oscillographic analysis of the phrase “*Bilirəm sən də dedin / yox yara hacət sənsiz*” (“I know that you also said: there is no need for a wound without you”) revealed that, in performance, it is realized as a two-syntagm structure. In the first (progreident) syntagm, the maximum fundamental frequency (F0) is recorded in the initial position and reaches 354 Hz. The gradual decrease in both frequency and intensity characteristics is a typical feature of the terminal part of the intonational structure and reflects the process of intonational closure.

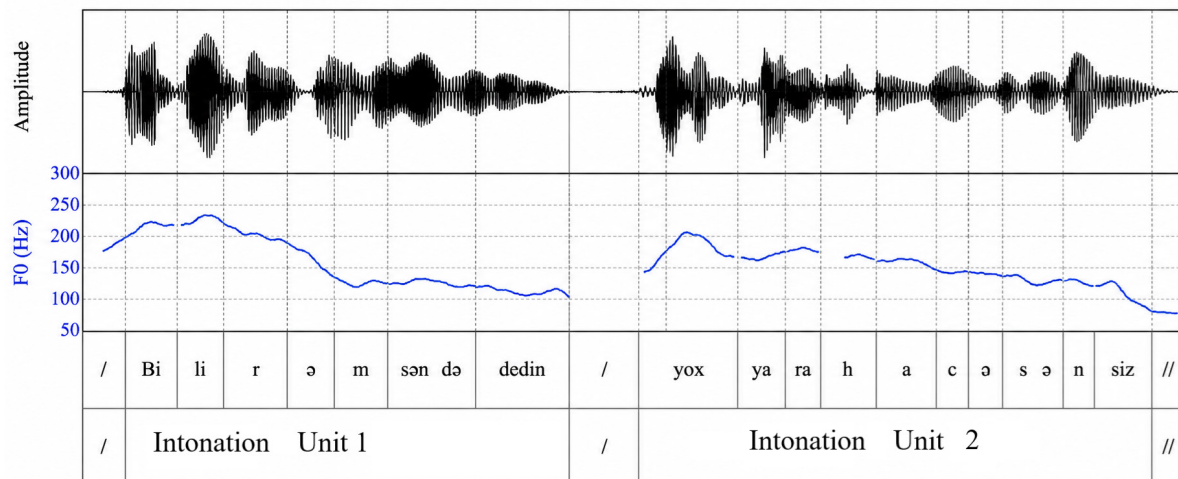
A different pattern emerges in the analysis of the temporal parameter of this phrase. At the end of the first syntagm, the duration

of the vowel /i/ in the word “*dedin*” is 101 ms, whereas in the terminal syntagm the duration of the vowel /i/ in the final syllable of the word “*sənsiz*” increases to 150 ms. The total duration of the first syntagm is 2,448 ms, with an average syllable duration of 349 ms. In the second syntagm, the total duration reaches 3,244 ms, and the average syllable duration is 463 ms. A comparison of the temporal characteristics shows that the second syntagm is more extended: its overall duration exceeds that of the first syntagm by 796 ms, while the average syllable duration is greater by 114 ms. These findings indicate that the differences between the two syntagms are manifested not only in their

melodic and dynamic realization but also in their temporal organization. The increased duration of the second syntagm, accompanied by a decrease in fundamental frequency

and intensity, serves as an acoustic marker of its terminal function and contributes to the perception of intonational completeness in the musical phrase [see Oscillogram 3].

Oscillogram 3.



The acoustic analysis of the utterance “*Sən mənim qəlbimə hakim / sənə qul oldu könül*” (“You are the ruler of my heart / my soul has become your servant”) demonstrates a clear division into two syntagms. The first syntagm, “*Sən mənim qəlbimə hakim*,” is characterized by a rising–falling melodic contour. The maximum fundamental frequency (F0) is recorded on the word “*sən*” and reaches 384 Hz. The minimum value is observed on the final syllable of the word “*hakim*” at the end of the syntagm, where F0 decreases to 213 Hz, indicating a gradual reduction of melodic tension and the formation of a syntagmatic boundary. In the second syntagm, “*sənə qul oldu könül*,” higher fundamental-frequency values are observed at various points along the melodic line. The maximum F0 values occur at key phases of the syntagm, highlighting its emotional and semantic prominence as well as its active melodic organization. Analysis of the dynamic parameter shows that the maximum intensity values in both syntagms coincide with their initial positions. In the first syntagm, intensity reaches 72 dB, while in the second it attains 70 dB. As can be seen, the minimum F0 values are recorded on the final syllables of the syntagms – 293 Hz and 197 Hz, respectively – reflecting the descending movement of the melodic contour toward the boundary of syntagmatic completion. In

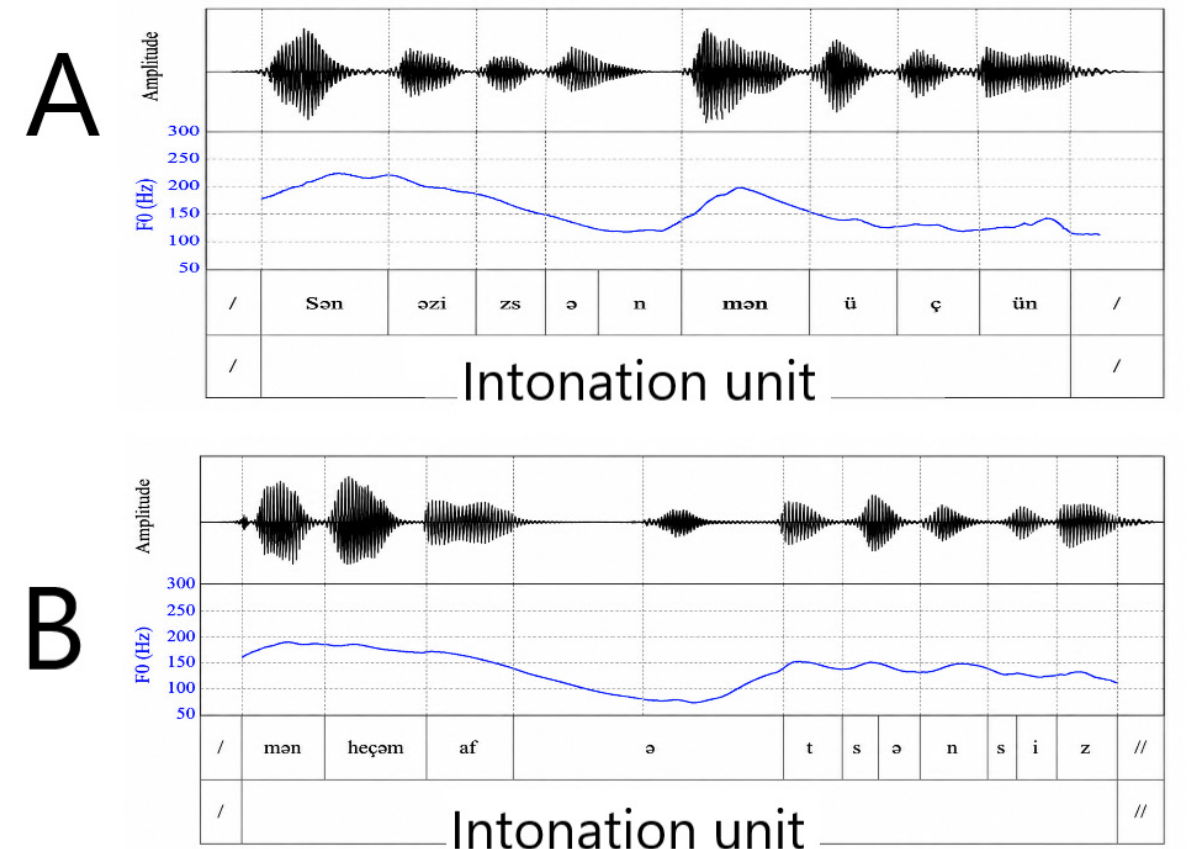
the terminal syntagm, “*mən heçəm əfət sən-siz*” (“I am nothing, a calamity without you”), the maximum fundamental frequency is registered on the first syllable of the word “*əfət*” and reaches 370 Hz. The high F0 value in this position indicates melodic accentuation and underscores the significance of this lexical item within the structure of the vocal phrase. The temporal analysis revealed differences in the durational organization of the two syntagms. The total duration of the first syntagm is 2,469 ms, with an average syllable duration of 352 ms. In the second syntagm, the total duration reaches 1,325 ms, while the average syllable duration amounts to 189 ms. A substantial contribution to the duration of the second syntagm is made by the vowel /ə/ in the word “*əfət*,” which exhibits an extended duration and significantly influences the overall temporal and prosodic organization of the phrase.

In both syntagms, a descending melodic contour is realized, characterized by a gradual decrease in the fundamental frequency toward the end of the phrase. Such a pattern is a typical acoustic marker of the terminal configuration of a vocal construction. The results of the acoustic analysis demonstrate that the organization of the vocal text is determined by the interaction of three principal parameters – fundamen-

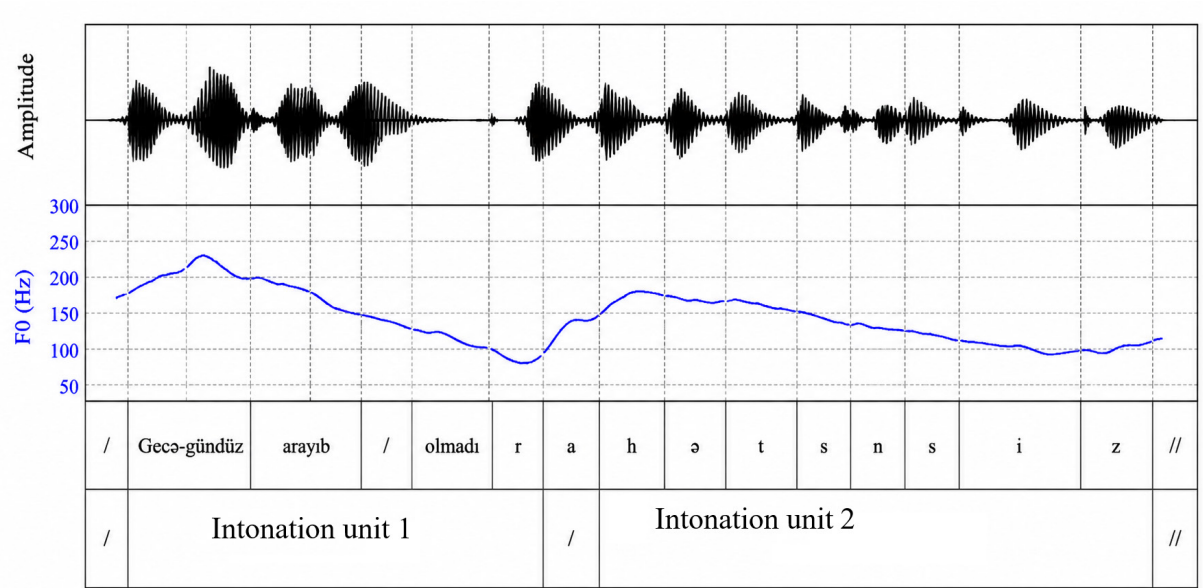
tal frequency (F0), intensity, and duration. The distribution of these parameters shapes the melodic contour, highlights semantic

centers, and contributes to the structuring of the syntagmatic organization of the musical utterance.

Oscillogram 4.



Oscillogram 5.



The diversity of the melodic structure of Azerbaijani folk songs is determined by the

specific features of modal organization, the system of pitch relationships, and the variety

of means of musical expression (Mammadov, 2017; Mammadova, 2018). It is precisely the interaction of these factors that ensures the artistic and emotional richness of the vocal text and shapes its distinctive national character. The specificity of folk-song melody is manifested in the nature of melodic movement, the peculiarities of intonational development, the relationship between pitch levels, and subtle variations in timbral and dynamic characteristics. Changes in the functional role of individual tones, the use of unexpected melodic transitions, and modulatory shifts create opportunities for conveying a wide range of emotional and semantic nuances in both performance practice and compositional creativity.

Conclusion

The melodic organization of Azerbaijani folk songs represents a system of pitch-functional relationships in which each tone fulfills a specific structural function. The sequence of tones within the melodic line directly reflects the principles of pitch organization and is characterized by a stable di-

rectional pattern: low register → rising pitch → return to the low register.

The results of the acoustic analysis demonstrate that this pattern is also manifested at the level of the principal intonational parameters. At the beginning of musical utterances, the fundamental frequency (F0) is generally realized within the mid-frequency range; in the central part of the phrase, frequency values tend to increase, after which a descending melodic contour is formed toward the end of the utterance. Initial tones are usually characterized by higher F0 values than final tones, reflecting the process of intonational development and the subsequent completion of the musical phrase.

Intensity parameters likewise contribute to the structuring of the musical utterance. During the initial and medial phases of a syntagm, intensity may reach its maximum values, serving to highlight the most significant melodic elements dynamically. In terminal position, by contrast, a gradual decrease in intensity is observed, which constitutes one of the acoustic markers of intonational completion.

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© Ali-Zade (Alekberova), Fidan Faig
Contact: fidanalakbar@gmail.com



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THE SIGNALING VALUE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY: A MEDIATION ANALYSIS OF LABOR MARKET OUTCOMES IN SHENZHEN

*Yunjun Kong*¹, *Nan Xu*²

¹ School of Foreign Languages, Chongqing Sanxia University
of Science and Technology, Chongqing, China

² Graduate School, Chongqing Sanxia University of
Science and Technology, Chongqing, China

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Abstract

Drawing on the economics of language, which conceptualizes language skills as a form of human capital, this study investigates the mechanisms through which foreign language proficiency (FLP) translates into labor market advantages in China's most globalized metropolis. While prior research has confirmed a positive correlation between FLP and earnings, the underlying pathways remain underexplored. Using survey data from 286 white-collar workers in Shenzhen, this study moves beyond bivariate correlation to test whether work-related foreign language use frequency mediates the FLP–income and FLP–promotion relationships. Results from path analysis reveal a theoretically intriguing pattern: for monthly income, the indirect effect via work-related usage is negligible (4.4% of total effect) and non-significant (Sobel $z = 0.79$, $p > 0.05$); for promotion, although partial mediation is observed (29.5% of total effect), the direct effect remains dominant. These findings challenge the intuitive “instrumental” assumption that FLP generates returns primarily through daily application, and instead foreground the signaling function of high-level language competence – employers reward FLP not merely as a tool for operational tasks, but as a credible signal of broader, hard-to-measure qualities such as cognitive agility, cultural adaptability, and future learning potential. This study contributes to language economics by disentangling two competing pathways, with implications for individual human capital investment, corporate talent management, and urban language policy.

Keywords: *Foreign language proficiency, Signaling theory, Human capital, Language economics, Mediation analysis, Shenzhen*

Introduction

The deepening of economic globalization has fundamentally reshaped labor markets, intensifying the demand for competencies that facilitate cross-border communication and collaboration (Grin, 2003; Graddol, 2006). Within this context, foreign language proficiency (FLP) has evolved from a primarily educational or cultural asset to a potentially critical factor for economic mobility, productivity, and career advancement. The paradigm of “language economics” provides a robust theoretical lens for this investigation, treating language skills as a form of human capital that requires investment and yields returns in the labor market, akin to education or training (Marschak, 1965; Chiswick & Miller, 2003, 2007).

Empirical studies, particularly in immigrant-receiving countries, have consistently documented a “wage premium” associated with proficiency in the host country’s dominant language (Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003; Dustmann & van Soest, 2002). However, research on the economic value of foreign language skills in major non-Western, rapidly developing economies remains less extensive. China presents a compelling case. Following decades of reform and opening-up, its leading metropolises – such as Shenzhen, Shanghai, and Beijing – have transformed into deeply integrated nodes of the global economy, characterized by dense concentrations of foreign trade, high-tech innovation, and multinational enterprise activity (Yeh & Chen, 2020). In these cities, English and other foreign languages serve as crucial tools for accessing global markets, knowledge, and networks.

Shenzhen provides an especially revealing context for testing the mechanisms of language returns. As China’s first Special Economic Zone, it has undergone a rapid transformation from a fishing village into a globally recognized technology and innovation hub, often described as “China’s Silicon Valley.” This development has been driven by a strategic combination of export-oriented industrialization, foreign capital inflows, and a vibrant digital economy – all of which have intensified the demand for internationally oriented human capital. At the same time, Shenzhen is characterized by a highly competitive labor market, where employers face

acute information asymmetries in identifying high-potential talent. This dual condition – high demand for global skills paired with intense competition in talent screening – makes Shenzhen an ideal setting for examining how language proficiency functions as a signal in the labor market, beyond its obvious instrumental value for communication. While prior econometric studies have documented positive returns to English proficiency in China’s urban labor markets (Liu & Zhang, 2015, 2016; Wang et al., 2017), these studies have focused on aggregate correlations and have not distinguished between the productive and signaling functions of language skills. Moreover, the specific dynamics of high-skilled workers in China’s most internationalized cities remain underexplored. This study addresses these gaps by situating the analysis in Shenzhen’s distinctive socioeconomic landscape and testing the relative explanatory power of instrumental versus signaling pathways.

Crucially, prior studies have largely treated FLP as a productive asset whose value is realized through its actual application in work tasks – what may be termed the “instrumental view.” However, an alternative perspective – signaling theory (Spence, 1973)—suggests that FLP may yield returns merely by certifying unobserved abilities, regardless of its daily usage frequency. The relative explanatory power of these two pathways remains untested in the Chinese metropolitan context. This study aims to disentangle these mechanisms by explicitly modeling work-related foreign language use frequency as a mediator between FLP and two key labor market outcomes: monthly income and promotion level.

We ask: In Shenzhen’s internationally oriented labor market, does FLP generate economic returns primarily through instrumental channels (i.e., by enabling more frequent cross-border communication at work), or through signaling channels (i.e., by serving as a proxy for broader competencies that are valued independent of actual usage)? By addressing this question, we contribute to the literature on language economics by testing the mechanisms underlying the language premium – a dimension that remains largely unexplored in existing research. The findings

also carry pragmatic implications for individuals making human capital investment decisions, for companies competing for global talent, and for urban policymakers aiming to enhance their city's international competitiveness.

Literature review

The Economics of Language: Foundational Perspectives

The systematic study of language as an economic phenomenon emerged in the early 1960s, when Marschak (1965) first proposed that language possesses economic attributes comparable to other forms of human capital. This foundational insight laid the groundwork for what subsequently became known as the “economics of language”—a field that applies economic tools and techniques to analyze the determinants and consequences of language competence (Bellante & Kogut, 1998; Grin, 2003).

Early research in this tradition focused primarily on immigrant populations in Western developed countries. Carliner (1981) demonstrated that income gaps among different language groups in Canada were closely linked to the languages people used and their proficiency levels. In the United States, McManus and Gould (1983) found that English proficiency was a crucial determinant of earnings among Hispanic workers, with positive effects also observed for native-born Americans. These studies established a consistent empirical pattern: language skills, particularly proficiency in the dominant language of the host country, are positively associated with labor market outcomes (Chiswick & Miller, 2007; Kanas & Tubergen, 2014).

Subsequent research expanded the geographical scope of inquiry. Angrist and Lavy (1997) found that French competence positively affected the wages of Moroccans. In the Greater Mekong Subregion, Paul (2008) documented the multiple dimensions through which multilingual communication facilitates trade, water resource management, and education. More recently, Hussain and Mukhopadhyay (2023) confirmed that English competence in India yields significant economic returns. Across these diverse contexts, a consensus has emerged:

an individual's language competence affects employment and income, particularly in linguistically diverse societies where language skills mediate access to economic opportunities.

Language Premium in the Chinese Context

Chinese scholars have embarked on economic analyses of language with distinctive local characteristics. Given China's vast territory and diverse dialectal landscape, existing studies have primarily focused on the impact of dialect usage on wage income, economic growth, and identity recognition in Chinese urban labor markets (Liu et al., 2015; Hou & Chen, 2024). This includes the impact of the Shanghai dialect on the income of migrant workers in Shanghai (Cheng et al., 2016) and how Guangzhou's migrant population views the relationship between Cantonese and local belongingness (Liang, 2014).

In terms of foreign language research, Liu and Zhang (2015) employed propensity score matching to estimate the economic return rate of English competence among Chinese urban residents, concluding that overall English competence yields high economic returns in China. Liu (2014) further argued that high language proficiency can reduce transaction and information costs during job searches, bolster bargaining power in employment contract negotiations, and thereby increase the likelihood of obtaining higher payment. Jia and Yue (2019) demonstrated that English proficiency significantly boosts starting salaries for Chinese university graduates – those with higher English competence tend to earn higher starting salaries. Wang, Smyth, and Cheng (2017) provided comprehensive evidence of the economic returns to English proficiency in the broader Chinese urban labor market. Additionally, demand for other languages, such as Japanese, is also on the rise (Cai & Huang, 2024).

However, a critical gap persists in this literature. The specific impact and extent of foreign languages on China's labor market remain insufficiently understood, and quantitative research examining the mechanisms of this impact is scarce. Most existing studies have focused on establishing the existence of a language premium rather than

disentangling how that premium is generated. This study addresses this gap by distinguishing between two competing pathways through which FLP may influence labor market outcomes: the instrumental pathway and the signaling pathway.

Signaling Theory and Labor Market Credentials

Signaling theory, originally formulated by Spence (1973), offers a powerful framework for understanding how educational credentials and other observable attributes function in labor markets. The core insight of signaling theory is that employers face information asymmetries: they cannot directly observe many qualities relevant to job performance – such as cognitive ability, perseverance, cultural adaptability, and learning potential – at the point of hiring or promotion. To resolve this uncertainty, employers use observable attributes as proxies or “signals” for these unobservable qualities.

In the context of language proficiency, signaling theory suggests that FLP may function as a credible signal of broader worker qualities. Acquiring functional or fluent proficiency in a foreign language requires substantial investment of time, effort, and often financial resources. This investment may correlate with traits such as cognitive ability (learning a language requires significant intellectual engagement), perseverance (sustained effort over years), cultural openness (willingness to engage with other cultures), and future learning potential (demonstrated ability to acquire complex new skills). Employers, especially when screening candidates for roles with an international dimension, may interpret high FLP as a proxy for these desirable attributes (Grin, 2003).

Crucially, the signaling perspective implies that the economic value of FLP may be realized even without frequent daily usage. The mere possession of a high-level language credential – a certified proficiency – communicates something about the individual’s overall capability that transcends the specific skill itself. This stands in contrast to the instrumental perspective, which would predict that economic returns to FLP are contingent upon actual application in productive tasks.

The Instrumental Pathway:

Human Capital and Productivity

The human capital perspective, as articulated by Becker (1993), offers an alternative account of the relationship between language skills and labor market outcomes. From this viewpoint, FLP is a productive asset that directly enhances a worker’s productivity in tasks involving international interaction. Proficiency reduces communication costs and errors, facilitates quicker access to and comprehension of foreign-language information (e.g., technical documentation, market reports, academic research), and enables direct, nuanced engagement with overseas clients, partners, and colleagues.

In sectors like international trade, finance, technology R&D, and professional services – all well-represented in Shenzhen – these productivity gains are directly valuable to employers, who may compensate them through higher wages. The instrumental perspective therefore predicts that the economic value of FLP is realized through its application: it is only when employees actually use foreign languages in their daily work that the productivity gains materialize. Under this view, work-related foreign language use frequency should serve as a significant mediator between FLP and labor market outcomes.

The Present Study: Bridging the Gap

The above review reveals a significant gap in the language economics literature, particularly in the Chinese metropolitan context. While numerous studies have confirmed the existence of a language premium, few have systematically distinguished between the productivity-enhancing effect (realized through actual work communication) and the signaling effect (independent of actual usage). This distinction is critical for both theory and policy. If the premium is purely instrumental, training programs should focus on task-specific communication skills, and employers should prioritize candidates with demonstrated work experience using foreign languages. If it is primarily signaling-based, then certification and advanced proficiency – even without extensive practical application – deserve greater emphasis.

This study addresses this gap by explicitly modeling work-related FL use frequency as

a mediator between FLP and two key labor market outcomes: monthly income and promotion level. By testing the relative explanatory power of the instrumental and signaling pathways, we contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how language capital generates economic returns in the rapidly globalizing context of Chinese metropolises.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

Our analysis is grounded in two interconnected theoretical pillars – human capital theory and signaling theory – as applied within the economics of language. These theories offer competing yet complementary predictions about the mechanisms through which FLP might influence labor market outcomes.

The Signaling Hypothesis

Drawing on Spence's (1973) signaling framework, we posit that FLP serves as a credible signal of unobservable worker qualities that employers value. High-level language proficiency requires sustained investment and correlates with cognitive ability, cultural openness, perseverance, and future learning potential. In Shenzhen's competitive, globally oriented labor market, employers may interpret FLP as a proxy for these attributes, leading to better job offers, higher compensation, and faster promotion tracks. The signaling hypothesis implies that the economic value of FLP is realized through its symbolic function – independent of how frequently the skill is actually deployed in work tasks.

The Instrumental Hypothesis

Drawing on human capital theory, we also posit that FLP enhances worker productivity in internationally oriented tasks. Proficiency enables effective cross-border communication, reduces transaction costs, and facilitates access to foreign-language information. In sectors well-represented in Shenzhen – international trade, finance, technology R&D, and professional services – these productivity gains are directly valuable to employers. The instrumental hypothesis implies that the economic value of FLP is realized through its application: workers who use foreign languages more frequently on the job derive greater productivity benefits and,

consequently, higher earnings and faster promotion.

Hypotheses

Based on the above theoretical considerations, we derive the following hypotheses:

H1: Foreign language proficiency is positively correlated with monthly income among the labor force in Shenzhen.

H2: Foreign language proficiency is positively correlated with job promotion level among the labor force in Shenzhen.

H3: Work-related foreign language use frequency mediates the relationship between FLP and monthly income.

H4: Work-related foreign language use frequency mediates the relationship between FLP and promotion level.

If H3 and H4 are supported (significant indirect effects), the instrumental pathway is validated. If the direct effects (FLP → outcome, controlling for usage) remain large and significant, the signaling pathway is also substantiated. The relative magnitude of direct versus indirect effects will indicate which pathway dominates.

Methods

Research Design and Sample

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected in December 2022 via a paper-based questionnaire distributed at workplaces and professional networks within Shenzhen. We targeted industries where foreign language use was anticipated to be relevant: technology enterprises, foreign trade companies, professional service firms (e.g., law, finance, consulting), and the IT sector. A convenience sampling method was used, with screening to primarily include white-collar workers (e.g., professionals, managers, engineers, technicians) who had completed tertiary education. This focus is justified as this cohort is most directly engaged in the knowledge-intensive, internationally connected work where language skills are theorized to have economic value.

The final sample comprised 286 valid responses. While sufficient for conducting preliminary correlational and path analyses, we explicitly acknowledge that this constitutes a convenience sample. It is not representative of Shenzhen's entire diverse labor force

of over 10 million, which includes vast numbers in manufacturing, logistics, and domestic services. This limitation is discussed in detail later. All participants provided written informed consent, and the study protocol received ethical approval from the Institutional Review Board of Chongqing Sanxia University of Science and Technology (Ref: 2022-SFL-LLPZ-11003).

Measures

Foreign Language Proficiency (FLP): The key independent variable was measured by a single item: “What is your current level of proficiency in your first foreign language (the one you use most or are most confident in)?” Responses were on a 4-point ordinal scale: 1 = “Cannot use at all”, 2 = “Can barely speak a few words”, 3 = “Can have daily conversations”, 4 = “Can use fluently.” Self-assessed language proficiency, while subjective, is widely used in major social surveys and has been shown to correlate reasonably well with objective test scores (Blöndal et al., 2020).

Monthly Income (INC): Respondents reported their average monthly pre-tax income in RMB. For analysis, responses were categorized into three ordered groups reflecting local income distribution: 1 = “10,000 yuan or less”, 2 = “10,001–20,000 yuan”, 3 = “20,001 yuan or more”.

Promotion Level (PROM): Career advancement was approximated by the respondent’s current job title/position, coded as an ordinal variable: 1 = “Ordinary staff/non-managerial”, 2 = “Middle-level management/team leader”, 3 = “Senior-level management/department head or above”.

Foreign Language Use at Work (FL_Use): To serve as the mediator, respondents indicated the frequency of using their FLP in 10 common professional scenarios (e.g., “reading work emails,” “participating in international conference calls,” “writing reports”) on a 5-point scale from “Never” to “Very often.” An average composite score was calculated. Internal consistency was high (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.89$).

Control/Demographic Variables: Data on gender, age, highest education level, and industry sector were collected for sample description and control purposes.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 26). Descriptive statistics characterized the sample and FLP use patterns. Given the ordinal nature of the key variables (FLP, INC, PROM), Spearman’s rank-order correlation coefficient (ρ) was employed to test the monotonic relationships posited in H1 and H2. A significance level of $p < .05$ (two-tailed) was applied.

To test the mediation hypotheses (H3 and H4), path analysis based on the correlation matrix was conducted following the procedures recommended by Wen and Ye (2014). Standardized path coefficients were derived, and the significance of indirect effects was assessed using the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982). While full raw-data bootstrapping was not feasible due to data accessibility constraints, the mathematical consistency between the correlation-matrix approach and raw-data regression ensures the reliability of the estimated path coefficients. Future research with full access to raw data should replicate these findings using bootstrapping techniques (e.g., PROCESS Model 4 with 5,000 resamples; Hayes, 2017) to provide more robust confidence intervals for the indirect effects. This limitation is addressed in the discussion section.

Potential common method bias (CMB) was addressed through both procedural and statistical considerations. Procedurally, the questionnaire was designed with temporal and psychological separation of measures: the independent variable (FLP) was placed in the demographic section, the mediator (FL_Use) in a separate section on work behaviors, and the outcome variables (income and promotion) in a later section on career outcomes. Additionally, different scale formats (4-point, 5-point, and 3-point) were used across sections to reduce consistency artifacts, and respondent anonymity was guaranteed to minimize social desirability bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The sample consisted of 61.5% males and 38.5% females, with an average age of 32.4 years ($SD = 6.7$). Educational attainment was high: 32.3% held a postgraduate degree and 47.4% held a bachelor’s degree. Regard-

ing income, 18.2% earned above 20,000 RMB/month, 39.5% earned 10,000–20,000 RMB/month, and 42.3% earned 10,000 RMB/month or less. In terms of positions, 15.7% were in senior management, 33.9% in middle management, and 50.3% were ordinary staff.

English was the dominant first foreign language (89.2%), followed distantly by Japanese (2.5%) and French (4.2%). On the 4-point proficiency scale, 24.1% reported being able to use their first foreign language “fluently,” 43.0% for “daily conversation,” 22.0%

“barely speak a few words,” and 10.8% “cannot use at all.” The average score for foreign language use at work was 3.12 (SD = 0.89) on the 5-point scale, indicating a moderate level of practical application. The most frequent uses were introducing one’s company/work (M = 3.88), reading instructions/documents (M = 3.79), and participating in training/lectures in a foreign language (M = 3.28).

Correlation Analysis

The results of the Spearman correlation analyses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Spearman’s Rank Correlations Between Key Variables*

Variable	1. FLP	2. Income	3. Promotion	4. FL_Use
1. Foreign Lang. Prof. (FLP)	–			
2. Monthly Income	.70**	–		
3. Promotion Level	.77**	.65**	–	
4. FL Use at Work	.81**	.58**	.72**	–

Note. N = 286. ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed). FLP: 1–4 scale. Income: 1=<10k, 2=10–20k, 3=>20k RMB. Promotion: 1=Staff, 2=Middle, 3=Senior. FL Use: 1–5 composite score

As shown in Table 1, foreign language proficiency demonstrated a strong, statistically significant positive correlation with monthly income ($\rho = 0.70$, $p < .01$). This finding supports H1. Similarly, a very strong positive correlation was found between FLP and promotion level ($\rho = 0.77$, $p < .01$). This finding supports H2. As expected, income and promotion were also positively correlated ($\rho = 0.65$). Furthermore, the self-reported frequency of FLP use at work showed very strong correlations with FLP itself ($\rho = 0.81$) and strong correlations with both income ($\rho = 0.58$) and promotion ($\rho = 0.72$), lending contextual validity

to the proficiency measure and suggesting that actual use may mediate or reinforce the value of the skill – a possibility tested directly in the following section.

Mediation Analysis

While the correlation results confirm the existence of a language premium, they do not reveal how FLP translates into these economic returns. To test the instrumental pathway (H3 and H4), we conducted a path analysis with work-related FL use frequency as the mediator. Standardized path coefficients are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Standardized Path Coefficients and Sobel Test for Mediation Models*

Path	Outcome: Monthly Income (INC)	Outcome: Promotion Level (PROM)
Total Effect (c)	0.70**	0.77**
FLP → FL_Use (a)	0.81**	0.81**
FL_Use → Outcome (b)	0.038	0.280**
Direct Effect (c')	0.669**	0.543**
Indirect Effect (a × b)	0.031	0.227

Path	Outcome: Monthly Income (INC)	Outcome: Promotion Level (PROM)
Proportion Mediated	4.4%	29.5%
Sobel z	0.79	6.58**

*Note: N = 286. **p < .01 (two-tailed). Sobel test (Sobel, 1982) was used to examine the significance of the indirect effects*

Mediation Effect on Monthly Income (H3)

For the income model, the total effect of FLP on monthly income was 0.70. After controlling for the mediator (work-related FL use frequency), the direct effect (c') remained substantial at 0.669 and remained statistically significant. In contrast, the indirect effect transmitted through work-related FL use frequency was merely 0.031, accounting for only 4.4% of the total effect. The Sobel test yielded $z = 0.79$ ($p > 0.05$), indicating that this indirect effect did not reach statistical significance.

Thus, H3 is not supported. The income premium associated with FLP is driven almost entirely by its direct effect, rather than indirectly through the frequency of using foreign languages at work. Individuals with higher FLP earn more not primarily because they “use foreign languages more frequently on the job,” but rather because the proficiency itself commands a market premium independent of actual usage occasions.

Mediation Effect on Promotion Level (H4)

For the promotion model, the total effect of FLP on promotion was 0.77. The direct effect (c') was 0.543, while the indirect effect was 0.227, accounting for 29.5% of the total effect. The Sobel test showed $z = 6.58$ ($p < 0.01$), indicating that this indirect effect was statistically significant.

Thus, H4 is partially supported. Work-related FL use frequency serves as a significant partial mediator between FLP and career advancement. However, the direct effect remains the dominant channel, accounting for over 70% of the total influence.

Summary: Signaling Dominates

Taken together, the two mediation models yield a theoretically intriguing finding

that challenges the intuitive instrumental assumption: work-related foreign language use frequency is not the central channel through which FLP generates economic returns. For monthly income, the mediating role was negligible and non-significant; for promotion, although significant partial mediation was observed, the direct effect still accounted for over 70% of the total influence. This pattern strongly suggests that the signaling function of FLP – its role as a credible indicator of unobserved competencies – outweighs its instrumental utility in Shenzhen’s high-skilled labor market.

Discussion

Theoretical Implications: Signaling vs. Instrumental Pathways

The findings of this study offer several theoretical contributions to the economics of language.

First, the mediation analysis moves beyond mere correlation to uncover the mechanism through which FLP translates into economic advantages. The non-significant indirect effect for income and the dominant direct effect for promotion (70%+ of total influence) indicate that, in Shenzhen’s knowledge-intensive, internationally oriented labor market, employers reward FLP not primarily because it is frequently deployed in daily tasks, but rather because high-level language competence serves as a credible signal of broader, hard-to-measure attributes – cognitive agility, cultural adaptability, perseverance, and future learning potential (Spence, 1973; Grin, 2003).

Second, this finding challenges the intuitive “instrumental” assumption embedded in much of the language economics literature – namely, that FLP generates returns through the productivity gains derived from its actual application. While this instrumental pathway undoubtedly operates (as evi-

denced by the significant partial mediation for promotion), the signaling pathway is considerably stronger. In other words, the economic value of FLP in this context is more “symbolic” than “instrumental”: possessing a high level of a foreign language signals a global-ready professional identity, which commands a premium independent of actual usage frequency.

Third, this study extends prior research on language premiums in China (Wang, Smyth, & Cheng, 2017; Liu & Zhang, 2016) by specifying a key boundary condition: the return to FLP does not require daily application; it operates through the mere perception of capability. This distinction carries important implications for human capital theory: language skills may function as “credential capital” rather than solely “productive capital” in certain labor market contexts.

Fourth, the differential patterns observed between income and promotion are also noteworthy. While the direct signaling effect dominates for both outcomes, the indirect instrumental pathway is stronger for promotion than for income. This may reflect different evaluation criteria: compensation decisions may rely more heavily on observable credentials (signaling), while promotion decisions may incorporate both credentials and demonstrated performance in work-related language tasks.

Comparison with Prior Research

Our findings resonate with and extend prior research on language premiums in China in several ways. First, the strong positive correlations between FLP and income ($\rho = 0.70$) and between FLP and promotion ($\rho = 0.77$) are consistent with the broader literature documenting language premiums (Wang et al., 2017; Liu & Zhang, 2015; Jia & Yue, 2019). However, our mediation analysis adds a critical layer of nuance that previous studies have not captured: the premium operates primarily through signaling rather than instrumental mechanisms.

Second, our findings align with Grin’s (2003) theoretical assertion that language skills have both productive and symbolic value, but we go further by quantifying the relative contribution of each pathway. The finding that the direct signaling effect accounts

for over 95% of the income premium and over 70% of the promotion premium provides empirical validation for the theoretical distinction that Grin and others have drawn but have rarely tested directly.

Third, our findings contrast with studies in immigrant-receiving contexts (Chiswick & Miller, 2007; Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003), where the instrumental pathway – enabling daily communication in the host country’s dominant language – typically plays a central role. In the Chinese metropolitan context, where foreign language is a “second” rather than “first” language of daily life, the signaling function appears to be more prominent. This contextual difference underscores the importance of geographical and cultural specificity in the economics of language.

Contextual Background: Shenzhen’s Language Environment

These findings should be interpreted against the backdrop of Shenzhen’s distinctive sociolinguistic context. As an emerging immigrant city established as China’s first Special Economic Zone, Shenzhen has evolved into a highly influential, modern, and international metropolis, with its rapid development famously termed “Shenzhen Speed.” In Shenzhen, various dialects from all over the country have their own soil for survival, though primarily within localized community circles. Nevertheless, many public service institutions, professionals, and businesspersons can provide services in English, and a significant number of young people speak relatively fluent English.

According to the Activity Plan of Speaking Foreign Languages in Shenzhen since 2010, Shenzhen has launched various activities, such as the “Millions of Citizens Speak Foreign Languages” campaign to increase the prevalence of foreign language use in public services and enhance citizens’ foreign language competence. The popularity of foreign languages, especially English, in Shenzhen is very high, creating a strong atmosphere of English learning. Since 2014, events like English Speaking Contests in the Window Industry and Corporate have been organized, eventually becoming hallmark features of the “Shenzhen Citizens Speak Foreign Languages” initiative, sparking

city-wide enthusiasm for English (Li & Hu, 2016). These activities have driven more citizens to speak foreign languages, attach importance to them, love foreign languages, and feel the charm of globalization, thereby enhancing the city's international ambiance.

This context likely amplifies the signaling effect documented in our study: in a city where foreign language competence is widely valued but not universally deployed in daily work, possessing high-level competence functions as an especially potent differentiator of professional excellence. The fact that Shenzhen's labor market is highly competitive and internationally oriented means that employers are particularly attentive to signals that distinguish high-potential candidates from the broader talent pool.

Practical Implications

The implications of this study are multi-level, spanning individual professionals, corporate talent management, and urban policy.

For individual professionals, the findings underscore that investing in advanced foreign language proficiency yields tangible economic returns – even if their current job does not require frequent language use. The signaling value of high-level competence can enhance both income and promotion prospects, independent of whether the skill is deployed daily. This suggests that individuals should pursue FLP not merely as a task-specific tool but as a long-term credential that certifies broader professional capabilities. For young professionals in particular, our results suggest that aiming for “fluent” or “professional” level competence (rather than stopping at “daily conversation” level) is where the largest marginal returns are concentrated.

For corporations operating in Shenzhen and similar metropolises, the findings highlight the importance of recognizing FLP as a general indicator of high-potential talent, rather than solely as a job-specific skill requirement. Talent management strategies should integrate FLP into recruitment, compensation, and leadership development frameworks, valuing advanced proficiency as a signal of global readiness and cognitive excellence. Recruitment processes should consider FLP as a screening criterion for roles that require international engagement,

but also for general managerial positions where cognitive agility and cultural adaptability are valuable. Compensation structures should reflect the market premium associated with advanced FLP, and leadership development programs should encourage and support the acquisition of high-level language competence among high-potential employees.

For city policymakers in Shenzhen and aspiring international hubs, the data reinforce the connection between a population's language capacity and the city's economic vitality. However, our findings suggest that policy emphasis should extend beyond promoting everyday usage (e.g., public signage, service industry English) to fostering advanced-level competence among the professional workforce. Strategic public investment in high-level language education, such as postgraduate programs in specialized foreign languages, business English for executives, and cross-cultural communication training, may yield higher economic returns than broad-based, basic-level language campaigns. This aligns with Shenzhen's existing initiatives while suggesting a shift in emphasis toward quality over quantity.

For educators and curriculum designers, the dominance of the signaling pathway implies that language education should not only focus on practical communication skills but also on certifying proficiency through recognized credentials (e.g., international testing standards). The “fluent” and “professional” levels – where the largest economic returns concentrate – should be the priority targets for advanced language programs, whereas basic levels (keyword and daily conversation) yield limited market premiums. Thus, training systems should prioritize ladderized pathways that push learners beyond the conversational threshold into professional and expert tiers. This argues for differentiated curricula that recognize the diverse goals and trajectories of language learners rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

To operationalize this differentiated vision, Table 3 proposes a six-level classification of foreign language competence, ranging from basic keyword recognition to near-native expert proficiency. This framework is designed to align specific competence levels

with distinct target populations and occupational requirements, providing a practical

reference for curriculum design, workforce development, and language policy planning.

Table 3. *Proposed Classification of Foreign Language Competence Levels*

Level	Target Population	Competence Description
Keyword level	General public, freelancers, and citizens requiring basic foreign language popularization	Ability to recognize and pronounce common words (e.g., “stadium,” “car,” “police”) for basic survival and orientation purposes.
Daily conversation level	Ordinary public social personnel, grassroots workers, and community service providers	Ability to handle routine daily conversations, such as greetings, shopping, dining, and asking for directions.
Specific conversation level	Workers in specific jobs or industries (e.g., restaurants, hotels, stations, post offices, banks, and hospitals)	Mastery of industry-specific terminology and phrases to provide professional services in the target language.
Fluent level	Intermediate language professionals in the field of public affairs, mainly foreign-related institutions (e.g., customs officers, international airline cabin crew)	Ability to use the language proficiently and fluently in public service settings, providing effective communication and assistance to foreign nationals.
Professional level	Senior language professionals in the field of professional affairs, such as diplomats, international lawyers, and academic researchers	Ability to use both oral and written language for professional academic exchanges, to deliver prepared and impromptu speeches on international occasions, and to engage in timely professional feedback.
Expert level	Expert language professionals in this field or industry, including conference interpreters, senior translators, and language policy advisors	Ability to reach or approximate the level of educated native speakers of the target language, with full command of nuances, registers, and cultural references.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study offers valuable insights, several limitations must be candidly acknowledged, as they define the scope of our conclusions and chart a path for more definitive research.

First, regarding external validity and sampling, our convenience sample of 286 white-collar workers from specific industries, while informative, cannot be generalized to all of Shenzhen’s vast and stratified labor market. The observed strong correlations may be

most applicable to the professional, technology, and trade sectors. Future research must employ larger, stratified random sampling frameworks that encompass a wider range of occupations, educational backgrounds, and industries within Shenzhen and across multiple Chinese metropolises (e.g., Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou) to test the robustness and variability of the language premium.

Second, regarding internal validity and causal inference, the cross-sectional design prohibits causal claims. Although theory posits that FLP leads to better outcomes,

alternative explanations are plausible, including reverse causality (higher income affording more language learning opportunities) and confounding by unobserved “global competence” factors. Furthermore, common method bias (CMB) cannot be entirely ruled out, as all key variables were self-reported by the same respondents. However, the non-significant indirect effect in the income mediation model (4.4% of total effect, Sobel $z = 0.79$, $p > .05$) suggests that CMB is unlikely to be the primary driver of our core findings; if CMB had been severe, it would have uniformly inflated correlations across all pathways, yet the indirect pathway remains negligible while the direct signaling effect dominates. Nevertheless, future longitudinal studies or quasi-experimental designs are essential to establish causality, and objective measures should be incorporated to further mitigate CMB.

Third, regarding measurement and operationalization, self-reported proficiency and single-item measurement have inherent biases. Future studies should incorporate objective language assessments or multi-item scales to capture distinct skill modalities (listening, speaking, reading, writing). Similarly, measuring “promotion” solely by current title is crude; future work could use detailed career history data tracking the timing and frequency of promotions. Additionally, the mediation analysis was based on correlation matrix estimation rather than raw data modeling due to accessibility constraints; while the Sobel tests are mathematically consistent, future research should replicate these findings using bootstrapping techniques (e.g., PROCESS Model 4 with 5,000 resamples; Hayes, 2017) to provide more robust confidence intervals.

Fourth, regarding analytical depth and conceptual validation, our analysis was primarily bivariate and path-based. The premium attributed to FLP likely interacts with other variables, necessitating multivariate regression analyses that control for work experience, university prestige, and social networks. Moderation analyses could also explore whether the return to FLP differs by industry or firm ownership. Moreover, qualitative research – such as in-depth interviews with HR managers and professionals – is needed to illuminate how FLP translates into

economic advantage in specific workplace settings. Finally, the six-level classification of language competence proposed in this study requires further empirical validation to confirm whether these levels correspond to distinct labor market returns in terms of income and promotion outcomes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study establishes a strong empirical link between foreign language proficiency and economic success in Shenzhen’s core labor market, and further reveals that this link operates predominantly through a direct signaling mechanism rather than an indirect instrumental pathway via daily usage. The non-significant mediation for income and the dominant direct effect for promotion (accounting for over 70% of the total influence) challenge the intuitive assumption that “using” a language is what makes it valuable, and instead foreground the symbolic capital embedded in high-level linguistic competence. In Shenzhen – a city characterized by intense global connectivity and competitive talent markets – advanced FLP functions as a powerful credential that certifies cognitive agility, cultural adaptability, and future learning potential, commanding economic returns independent of how frequently the skill is deployed in routine work.

This study makes three contributions: (1) it moves beyond correlational evidence to test the mechanism of language returns, distinguishing between instrumental and signaling pathways; (2) it finds the signaling effect to be dominant in China’s most globalized metropolis, challenging the instrumental assumptions implicit in much of the language economics literature; and (3) it provides empirical grounding for human capital theory by demonstrating that the mere possession of high-level language competence commands a significant market premium, regardless of frequency of use.

By acknowledging its limitations and proposing concrete future directions, we hope this work stimulates further investigation into the vital role of language capital in shaping careers and economies within an increasingly interconnected world. The findings underscore that in an era of intensifying globalization, investment in language education is not merely an investment in

communication skills, but an investment in the human capital that underpins economic competitiveness at individual, organizational, and urban levels.

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© Yunjun Kong, Nan Xu

Contact: kongyj2@126.com; kongyunjun@sanxiau.edu.cn; xunan@sanxiau.edu.cn



Section 2. General philology and linguistics

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FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT STAGES OF COMPLEX SUBORDINATE SENTENCES IN TURKIC LANGUAGES. (BASED ON AZERBAIJANI LANGUAGE)

*Akhmadova Faqana Mammadali kyzy*¹

¹ PhD student in Philology, Linguistics Institute named after
I.Nasimi of Azerbaijan National Academt of Sciences

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Abstract

The article examines the formation and the main stages in the development of complex subordinate sentences in the Turkic languages, based on Azerbaijani as one of the most representative languages of the Oghuz group. It explores the historical evolution of the means of expressing subordination – from intonational patterns and asyndetic structures to the formation of a developed system of conjunctions, connective words, morphological markers, and functional elements. The role of intonation, verbal morphological forms, affixes, and functional parts of speech in the emergence and structural complication of complex subordinate constructions is analyzed. Special attention is given to controversial issues concerning the syntactic status of participial and converbal constructions within the system of subordinate clauses, particularly their relation to predicative structures and the problem of distinguishing between phrase syntax and sentence syntax. The functioning of the conjunction *ki*, the processes of its grammaticalization, semantic differentiation, and its role in establishing subordinate relations in various types of complex subordinate sentences are examined in detail. On the basis of comparative-typological and historical-comparative analysis, the study identifies both common and distinctive features of complex subordinate structures in Azerbaijani and other Turkic languages, and traces the interrelation between the development of subordination and the evolution of the written literary norm. It is demonstrated that the increasing structural complexity of complex subordinate sentences is directly connected with the development of abstract thinking, the expansion of functional styles, and the refinement of syntactic means of text organization, as well as with the general tendency toward structural standardization and normalization of the literary language in historical perspective. The obtained results make it possible to clarify the typological position of Azerbaijani within the system of Turkic languages in terms of the development of subordinate syntactic structures. The study also outlines

перспектив for further research in the field of historical syntax and grammaticalization processes in the Turkic languages.

Keywords: *Turkic languages, Azerbaijani language, complex subordinate sentence, subordination, syntax, grammaticalization, conjunction ki, sentence typology, historical development of syntax*

Introduction

In the development of the language system, syntactic structure occupies a special place, and one of its most complex forms is the complex sentence with subordination. This sentence type reflects not only the structural richness of a language, but also serves as an important indicator of the level of logical reasoning, abstract thinking, and the development of the written literary language. From this perspective, “determining the status and boundaries of complex subordinate sentences within syntax has consistently remained a relevant issue in linguistics (Musaoğlu, M., 2005). Researchers rightly note that one of the central problems of syntax is precisely the delimitation and proper classification of simple and complex sentences, particularly complex subordinate constructions (Habibova K. A., 2009, p. 18). This position is also confirmed in modern comparative syntax, where the classification of subordinate clauses is regarded as “one of the most controversial issues in syntactic theory,” and many existing classification systems are considered flawed due to their lack of a unified underlying principle (Yunusov, D., & Arabov, V., 2015, p. 185).

It is well known that in the early stages of language development, simple sentences and coordinate complex sentences predominated, whereas complex subordinate sentences emerged at later stages, largely in parallel with the formation of the written literary language. The historical development of the Turkic languages demonstrates that various formal means were formed to express relations of subordination, resulting in the emergence of structurally rich models of subordinate constructions. It has been noted in particular that in Turkic languages a “relatively large set of formal types is available” for the realization of subordinate clauses, and this formal diversity constitutes an important indicator of the language’s historical evolution (Tüngüç Çelik K., 2020, p. 16). At the same time, it is emphasized that each complex syntactic unit can be realized in

different structural variants within the paradigm of complex sentences, which clearly demonstrates the developmental dynamics of subordinate constructions (Yunusov, D., & Arabov, V., 2015, p. 185).

In the earliest periods, relations of subordination were primarily expressed through intonation: later, however, the development of specific syntactic means – such as conjunctions, connective words, particles, and affixes – created the conditions for the systematic formation of this sentence type. In Azerbaijani, the structure of complex subordinate sentences, the interrelation of their components, and the role of connective devices have been interpreted from various theoretical perspectives in linguistic scholarship. In this respect, relations of subordination are not viewed as a fixed and immutable mechanism, but rather as a dynamic syntactic system that has undergone formal and semantic variation throughout historical development (Yunusov, D., & Arabov, V., 2015).

The issue of whether participial and converbal constructions should be treated as subordinate clauses remains one of the most controversial problems in Turkology. Research has shown that such constructions do not fully possess the structural and functional properties of independent subordinate clauses; rather, they function more as extended constituents of a simple sentence. Studies conducted on the basis of Azerbaijani data have scientifically demonstrated that participial, converbal, and infinitival constructions are not subordinate clauses within compound or complex sentences, but instead serve as expanding components of the simple sentence (Musaoğlu, M., 2005). This approach is consistent with contemporary syntactic conceptions that view subordination as a gradable phenomenon and acknowledge the existence of intermediate stages between subordinate clauses and word combinations (Yunusov, D., & Arabov, V., 2015).

This problem is not merely terminological in nature; it is of fundamental importance for accurately determining the boundaries be-

tween sentence syntax and the syntax of word combinations. For this reason, the study of the structural-semantic and functional properties of complex subordinate sentences is regarded as one of the central directions of modern syntactic research. Classifications based on the structure, meaning, and function of complex subordinate sentences have played a significant role in the development of syntactic theory in Azerbaijani linguistics (Musaoğlu, M., 2005).

Methods and Materials

The methodological foundation of the research is based on systemic and functional approaches widely accepted in contemporary linguistics. In order to determine the syntactic nature and structural characteristics of complex subordinate sentences, the descriptive method was employed. Through this method, the grammatical relations between the main and subordinate clauses, the means of expressing subordination, and the functional role of connective devices were consistently analyzed.

In addition, the structural-semantic analysis method was applied to investigate the semantic relations between the components of complex subordinate sentences, the semantic load of subordinate clauses, and the ways in which they function in relation to the main clause. Particular attention was devoted to the syntactic status of participial and verbal constructions, and their similarities and differences with subordinate clauses were identified through analytical examination.

The study also made use of historical-comparative and comparative-typological methods. These methods enabled the tracing of the emergence and developmental stages of complex subordinate sentences, as well as the comparison of Azerbaijani data with syntactic facts from other Turkic languages. As a result, the development and functional differentiation of connective devices in the formation of complex subordinate constructions were evaluated within a broader Common Turkic context.

The empirical base of the research consists of written sources representing various stages in the development of the Azerbaijani literary language, samples of classical poetry, contemporary language data, and scholarly studies

devoted to the problem of complex subordinate sentences. The selected materials were systematized and subjected to analysis; the findings were subsequently generalized and used in formulating theoretical conclusions.

Result

The complex subordinate sentence represents the final stage in the development of linguistic structure. By this, we mean that in any given language, the coordinate complex sentence historically preceded the subordinate complex sentence: simple sentences were linked to one another by means of intonation, thereby forming coordinate constructions. In fact, in the earliest periods, subordinate complex sentences – like coordinate ones – also arose solely through the intonational combination of simple sentences (Habibova K., 2011, p. 80), that is, through the subordination of one sentence to another by intonational means.

Auxiliary words and functional parts of speech emerged only at later stages of language development, since these – especially conjunctions – constitute more complex and abstract phenomena of thought, products of highly developed abstract reasoning. The existence and degree of development of complex subordinate sentences serve as indicators of a language's cultural and developmental level. From this perspective, the Turkic languages, and particularly Azerbaijani, may be regarded as among the most highly developed languages of the world.

It should also be noted that the emergence and development of complex subordinate sentences are closely connected with the formation and evolution of the written literary language; in spoken discourse and oral literary language, such constructions are not used as extensively. For this reason, Q.Kazimov writes: "Prior to the formation of the written literary language, intonation, a limited group of connective words, and the suffix -sa/-sə were more actively employed to link the components of a complex subordinate sentence; in later periods, connective words and a number of nationally borrowed conjunctions expanded their function. Therefore, connective devices should be studied together with subordinate clauses" (Kazimov G., 2000, p.12).

Discussing the historical development of the means that connect the components of complex subordinate sentences in Azerbaijani, Q.Kazimov writes: "...as in the modern Azerbaijani literary language, historically subordinate clauses are connected to the main clause in three types of relations:

a) A group of subordinate clauses functions in the position of a sentence element that is not overtly expressed in the main clause, thereby replacing it. Such clauses, in terms of function, resemble sentence constituents and answer one of the questions typically associated with them; however, in terms of structure, they differ from them completely" (Kazimov G., 2019, p. 160). For illustration, let us consider the following examples:

(1) *Həq bilir kim, ta əbəd könlümdə vardır ol həvəs* (Khatayi) ("God knows that in my heart that desire exists for eternity.")

(2) *Xoşdur ki, bulam vüsala fürsət* (Fuzuli) ("It is pleasing that I attain the chance of reunion.")

In the example (1) "*Həq bilir*" ("God knows") in the main clause does not contain an explicit object answering the questions *nə? nəyi?* (what? what does He know?); however, the answer to this question is expressed by the second clause – "*ta əbəd könlümdə vardır ol həvəs*" ("that this longing will remain in my heart forever").

In the second example, the predicate "*xoşdur*" ("It is pleasant") lacks an overt subject answering the question *nə?* (what?); yet this function is fulfilled by the subordinate clause following the conjunction "*ki*" – "*bulam vüsala fürsət*" ("that I may find the opportunity for union").

In both examples, the subordinate clauses legitimately function in place of sentence constituents. Undoubtedly, they can quite easily assume the form of a sentence element. When examining the language of historical monuments, it becomes evident that the use of subordinate clauses as substitutes for particular sentence elements has an ancient history. This, in turn, provides grounds for asserting that complex subordinate sentences once emerged as a result of relatively free adjacency relations between clauses.

b) The second group of subordinate clauses differs from the first in terms of inter-

nal relations. Here, the main clause actually contains a substitute element – a demonstrative pronoun – which answers the required question; therefore, the first clause appears formally complete. However, despite this formal completeness, the meaning remains incomplete or implicit, since the pronoun functioning as a sentence element points to something or someone, yet its real content is not explicitly expressed. In order to overcome this semantic opacity or abstraction, the subordinate clause becomes the real semantic content of the pronoun and provides its explanation. Thus, the subordinate clause does not simply complete the main clause as a whole, but rather serves as the concrete expression of a specific element within it that remains semantically indeterminate.

For illustration, let us consider the following examples:

(3) *Biz ol quşuz ki, dam danəmizdir* (Khatayi) (We are that bird whose grain is the snare).

(4) *Hakim oldur ki, onun olmaya zatında təmə* (Fuzuli) (A true ruler is the one who has no greed in his nature), etc.

In the examples provided, the pronouns "*ol*" and "*oldur*" acquire their real, concrete semantic content within the subordinate clauses.

c) The third group of subordinate clauses differs from the previous two, since here both the main clause and the subordinate clause are formally independent. The main and subordinate clauses enter into a syntactic relationship on the basis of adjacency, forming a unified whole; however, the subordinate clause assists in completing the idea expressed in the main clause. In this type, the subordinate clause is attached to the main clause. It should be noted that in complex sentences belonging to this group, the syntactic connection between the main and subordinate clauses is established through conjunctions and connective words. For example:

(5) *Əgər ayağına düşmək macalım olaydı, Dəxi götürməzdim baş anın əyağından* (Nasimi)

(If I had the strength to fall at your feet, I would never raise my head from them).

(6) *Gərçi düşmənligimdə fənnim çox, Dostluqda da dəxi misahım yox* (Fuzuli). (Although I am highly skilled in enmity,

In friendship I am likewise without equal).

(7) *Ey sənəm xublar içində sən düşübsən sərəfras,*

Eylə kim bağ içrə rəna sərvi-xoş bala düşər (Khatayi).

(O beloved, among the beauties you have become distinguished,

As in a garden a graceful cypress stands out), etc.

Since in the first and third groups there is a certain degree of proximity in the syntactic relationship between the main and subordinate clauses, it may be assumed that in very early periods this very process played a decisive role in the emergence of subordinate constructions.

Historically, subordinate clauses were used so rarely that it was at times difficult to distinguish them from coordinate complex sentences. A similar situation can be observed in several other Turkic languages with an ancient written literary tradition. G.Kazimov objects to this view, arguing that in complex subordinate sentences with comparative clauses, the main clause precedes the subordinate clause; therefore, one cannot speak of the main clause merely being juxtaposed to the subordinate clause (Kazimov G., 2019, p. 107). Although conditional and concessive (adversative) subordinate clauses may precede the main clause, they are nevertheless connected to it by means of conjunctions, particles, and affixes.

In general, dividing complex subordinate sentences into these three groups does not fully justify itself. The first and second groups are, in fact, almost identical in structural type. The difference lies in the fact that in one case a correlative (pattern) word is used, while in the other it is not. However, even when it is not overtly expressed, it can easily be inferred and restored. Classifying complex subordinate sentences according to the position of their components and the connective devices employed is more productive for studying their present state and historical development.

One of the prominent representatives of Azerbaijani linguistics, E.Abdullayev, who conducted specialized research on complex subordinate sentences and established a distinct scholarly school in this field, identifies four differences in the way the compo-

nents of complex subordinate sentences are connected: “1. One of the means that connect the components of a complex sentence is the conjunction. In coordinate complex sentences, non-subordinating conjunctions are used between the components, whereas in subordinate complex sentences, subordinating conjunctions are employed. 2. While the majority of coordinate complex sentences are constructed without conjunctions, the vast majority of subordinate complex sentences are formed with conjunctions. 3. Pronouns also play a certain role in linking components. However, there is a difference in their usage. In coordinate complex sentences, pronouns participating in linkage replace something already known (or refer to something known), whereas in subordinate complex sentences, they refer to something not yet specified and create the conditions for explanation (i.e., for the use of a subordinate clause). 4. Intonation also plays a certain role in connecting the components of a complex sentence. Between the components of a subordinate complex sentence, subordinating intonation is used, whereas in coordinate complex sentences, non-subordinating intonation is present” (Abdullayev E. Z., 2021, p. 327).

Complex subordinate sentences arise as a result of the combination of simple sentences through a relation of subordination. Therefore, in a complex subordinate sentence, one component is grammatically independent, while the other is dependent on it. The grammatically independent component of a complex subordinate sentence is called the subordinate clause.

The dependence of the subordinate clause on the main clause – its subordination – is formally and grammatically valid; however, in structural terms, the subordinate clause, like the main clause, is formed in accordance with all grammatical rules and, in certain respects, may even display greater structural completeness than the main clause. While the main clause may omit a particular constituent or require further clarification, the subordinate clause (in most cases) contains all of its necessary components and does not require additional explanation.

Although the subordinate clause is regarded as dependent, the following conditions are essential and necessary for its status as a clause:

1. The subordinate clause must express a complete thought.

2. There must be obligatory agreement between its principal constituents; that is, the predicate of the subordinate clause must agree with its subject.

3. Accordingly, the predicate of the subordinate clause must be fully formed.

4. The subordinate clause must be connected to the main clause by means of specific formal markers.

The problem of the subordinate clause remains one of the most controversial issues in Turkology, both with regard to modern Turkic languages and to the ancient Turkic languages (i.e., the language of early written monuments of the Turkic peoples). Some turkologists maintain that verbal constructions (participial and converbal constructions) in Turkic languages function as subordinate clauses within complex subordinate sentences. Although this view is primarily expressed in relation to modern Turkic languages, it is also reflected in certain studies devoted to the language of the Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions, the earliest written monuments of the Turkic peoples.

For example, the prominent A.Gadimaliyeva writes: “A complex subordinate sentence consists of two or more parts that have been formed as independent clauses. From the standpoint of structural organization, the components of a complex subordinate sentence – the subordinate and main clauses – are united into a single complex whole by means of: 1) connective words; 2) connective pause; 3) the special morphological form of the predicate of the subordinate clause (–duk, –sar)” (Kadimaliyeva A., 2016, p. 227). As can be seen, the author regards verbal constructions with the suffix -duk as subordinate clauses.

Another researcher of the language of the ancient Turkic Orkhon–Yenisei monuments, R.Rajabli, goes even further in this respect. He considers the verbal construction formed by the converb with the suffix -dukda (which he treats as a participle used in the ablative case) to be a temporal subordinate clause; constructions with the converb suffixes -ya, -ğalı, -gəli as subordinate clauses; and participial constructions with the suffix -duk (combined with the postposition *üçün* “for/because of”) as causal subordinate clauses (Rajabli A., 2009, P. 260–261).

What is striking is that, according to A.Rajabli, a participial construction with the suffix -duk used without a possessive suffix but with the postposition *üçün* forms a causal subordinate clause (e.g., *Tenri küç bertük için kanım kağan süsi böri tæg etmiş* (KT 12) – “Because Heaven granted strength, my father the khagan’s army was like a wolf”), whereas the same participial form, when used with a possessive suffix and the postposition *üçün*, does not constitute a subordinate clause (e.g., ... *inili-eçili kinşürtükin için, bağli-bodunhğ yonşurturkun için türk bodun illädük ilin içğinu ıdmış* ... (KT 6) – “... because he set the younger and elder brothers against one another, because he incited the beys and the people against one another, the Turkic people destroyed the state they had established ...”).

From the standpoint of both logic and grammar, there is no essential difference between the participial construction *tenri küç bertük için* and the constructions *inili-eçili kinşürtükin için* and *bağli-bodunhğ yonşurturkun için*. In the works of nearly all modern Kazakh and Kyrgyz linguists, the methodological approach to the problem of complex subordinate sentences follows this same line of interpretation.

In linguistics, it is generally accepted that the predicate of a subordinate clause must be fully formed as a finite verb; however, the -duk form, whether used with or without a possessive suffix, is not a finite verb. It should also be noted that in Turkic languages postpositions do not follow finite verbs, whereas the postposition “*üçün*” (“for/because of”) occurs after verbs marked with the suffix -duk (in both forms). The same can be said about other non-finite verb forms.

If the predicate of a subordinate clause is not fully formed and the verb serving as the governing element in participial and converbal constructions is grammatically incomplete, then such constructions cannot be regarded as predicates of subordinate clauses. From a methodological standpoint, it is likewise incorrect to treat participial and converbal constructions as subordinate clauses, since this would amount to equating the syntax of word combinations with sentence syntax. In fact, participial and converbal constructions belong to the domain of

phrase syntax, whereas subordinate clauses are the object of sentence syntax.

As for the claim that verbal constructions and subordinate clauses perform the same function, this phenomenon is referred to in grammar as grammatical synonymy. If we pursue this line of reasoning further, even constituents of simple sentences may perform the functions of subordinate clauses, yet no one classifies them as subordinate clauses. Participial and converbal constructions are therefore not subordinate clauses within complex subordinate sentences, but rather expanded constituents of an extended simple sentence.

Proceeding from this theoretical position, the role of genuine syntactic connective devices – particularly conjunctions – comes to the forefront in the formation of complex subordinate sentences. In this context, special attention should be paid to the conjunction “*ki*”, which is not of Indo-European origin but of Turkic origin and carries an essential functional load in connecting the components of complex subordinate constructions (Musaoğlu, M., 2005). Indeed, sentences constructed with the conjunction “*ki*” display a universal character across many languages and are realized in various formal configurations, which attests to the cross-linguistic recognition and structural productivity of this pattern (Güven M., (2016). However, in Azerbaijani the use of this conjunction exhibits specific nuances when compared with analogous constructions in other Turkic languages. (Csato E., Johanson L. 2021, p. 8). These specific features reflect the unique developmental trajectory of Azerbaijani with regard to both the semantic load and the syntactic position of the conjunction “*ki*”. Accordingly, this study analyzes the typological classification of complex subordinate sentences in Azerbaijani, traces their diachronic transformations, and examines how they have adapted to modern language norms through comparative-typological methods (Yunusov, D., & Arabov, V., 2015). This approach also encompasses a comparative analysis of complex subordinate sentence structures in Azerbaijani in relation to other Turkic languages, thereby revealing both their shared and distinctive features (Yunusov, D., & Arabov, V., 2015). Furthermore, the study investigates the diachronic development and

morphological and semantic diversity of complement types in the Turkic languages, explaining the complex structure of subordinate clauses through the application of contemporary linguistic methodologies (Rentzsch J., 2021, p. 20). In particular, the increasing use of subordinate clauses formed with the conjunction “*ki*” – beginning with Old Uyghur Turkic and continuing through Karakhanid Turkic, in works such as *Qutadgu Bilig* and *Atabetü'l Haqāyiq*, and especially in Qur'an translations – clearly demonstrates the diffusion of this structure across the Turkic languages and the gradual stabilization of its morphosyntactic features over time (Tüngüç Çelik K., 2020, p. 120). This wide distribution indicates that “*ki*” constructions constitute a natural and functionally productive means of expression in the Turkic languages, even though in some grammatical traditions such sentences are classified within the category of compound (or connected) sentences (Doğan, E., 2020). Such differences demonstrate that the conjunction “*ki*” in the Turkic languages – particularly in Azerbaijani – has undergone various processes of grammaticalization and has become enriched at the morphological, syntactic, and semantic levels (Csato E., Johanson L., 2021; Rentzsch J., 2021). In this context, linguistic discussions concerning the transfer of “*ki*” from Persian into the Turkic languages and its assimilation of certain functions of the interrogative pronoun “*kim*” further clarify its role in the formation of complex subordinate sentences (Doğan, E., 2020).

In the Turkic languages, the main clause and the subordinate clause occupy a relatively fixed position and order within the sentence structure. In complex subordinate sentences, however, the position of the main clause depends on the specific type of complex construction. The position of the main clause varies as follows: in constructions formed with relative pronouns, the main clause follows the subordinate clause; in conjunctive complex subordinate sentences, it most often precedes the subordinate clause, though in some cases it may follow it; and in constructions formed with the conditional mood, the main clause typically follows the subordinate clause.

Depending on stylistic requirements, however, these canonical grammatical positions may change: the main clause may ex-

change position with the subordinate clause, or one clause may occur within the other (Akhmadova A., 2023, p. 129). In linguistic literature, two types of complex subordinate sentences are generally distinguished: monocentric complex subordinate sentences and bicentric complex subordinate sentences.

In a monocentric complex subordinate sentence, the subordinate clause serves one constituent of the main clause. That is, it explains or specifies a particular element of the main clause. In this type, the subordinate clause either replaces a constituent that is formally present but weakly expressed and in need of clarification, or substitutes for a constituent that is not overtly expressed in the main clause (i.e., an omitted element). When such complex subordinate sentences are reduced to simple sentences, the subordinate clause assumes the position of the element in the main clause that it explains or replaces.

In bicentric complex subordinate sentences, by contrast, the subordinate clause does not clarify any single constituent taken separately; rather, it serves the main clause as a whole and explains it in its entirety. According to E. Z. Abdullayev, bicentric complex subordinate sentences originated from coordinate complex sentences. "One of the components of a coordinate complex sentence lost its independence and became grammatically subordinate, that is, it was transformed into a subordinate clause. However, semantically, the two original centers were preserved. For this reason, certain types of subordinate constructions (for example, result, adversative, and temporal subordinate clauses) are bicentric in nature. Accordingly, such subordinate clauses relate not to a specific constituent of the main clause, but to its overall meaning." (Abdullayev E. Z., 2021, p. 130).

In the modern Turkic languages, the development of complex subordinate sentences and the number of subordinate clauses directly depend on the development and variety of the means that connect the components of such sentences. The more numerous, diverse, and structurally developed these connective devices are, the greater the number of subordinate clauses, as well as the richer their semantic variants, stylistic nuances, modes of expression, and grammatical realizations.

For example, among the Turkic languages belonging to the Oghuz group of the Western Hun branch – particularly the Oghuz-Seljuk subgroup – modern languages are considerably richer in the development of conjunctions than those Turkic languages of the Oghuz-Kipchak group within the Eastern Hun branch. Consequently, in the Turkic languages of the Oghuz-Seljuk subgroup, complex subordinate sentences are more highly developed than in the Kyrgyz-Kipchak group; they display a wider range of semantic types, a greater number of subordinate clause constructions, and more varied and diversified means of expression.

Conclusion

The analysis of the historical and structural development of complex subordinate sentences in the Turkic languages, based on Azerbaijani data, demonstrates that subordination represents a relatively late but highly significant stage in the evolution of syntactic structure. Complex subordinate constructions emerged gradually from earlier coordinate and intonational patterns and became systematized through the development of specialized connective devices, including conjunctions, particles, affixes, and morphological markers.

The study confirms that the structural diversity and semantic richness of subordinate clauses directly depend on the degree of development of connective means within a given language. In this respect, the Azerbaijani language, particularly within the Oghuz-Seljuk subgroup of the Turkic languages, exhibits a highly developed system of subordination characterized by a wide range of semantic types and expressive variants. The increasing grammaticalization and functional expansion of the conjunction "ki" further illustrate the dynamic nature of syntactic evolution and the interaction between internal linguistic processes and historical-cultural factors.

At the same time, the research clarifies the controversial issue of participial and converbal constructions, demonstrating that these formations should not be equated with subordinate clauses, since they belong to phrase syntax rather than sentence syntax. This distinction is essential for maintaining methodological consistency in Turkic syntactic studies.

Overall, the findings show that the development of complex subordinate sentences is closely linked to the formation of the written literary language and reflects broader cognitive and cultural advancement. The typological and diachronic perspective adopted

in this study contributes to a deeper understanding of subordination mechanisms in Turkic languages and provides a theoretical basis for further comparative and functional investigations in modern syntax.

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© Akhmadova F. M.

Contact: farqana220580@gmail.com



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THEORETICAL AND LINGUISTIC FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF "WOMAN" IN THE MODERN LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL SPACE

*Saidova Maftuna Ergashovna*¹

¹ Head of the Information Service Department of the Committee on Sanitary and Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health; Advisor to the Chairperson of the Committee on Information Policy Matters Uzbekistan, Tashkent

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Abstract

The article examines the theoretical and linguistic foundations of the study of the concept of "woman" in the context of rapid sociocultural transformations of the 21st century. The cognitive, linguocultural, discursive, and genderlabeled parameters of the concept are analyzed, and current trends in its representation in language, media discourse, and digital communication are identified. Special attention is paid to changing the value structure of the concept under the influence of global processes – digitalization, transformation of gender roles, strengthening of female agency, and expansion of the public space of the female voice.

Keywords: *the concept of "woman", cognitive linguistics, media discourse, digital identity, gender representation, cultural linguistics*

Modern humanitarian knowledge is undergoing a period of intense transformation associated with digitalization, mediatization, and the restructuring of social institutions. In these conditions, the concept of "woman" acquires particular significance as a dynamic cognitivediscursive unit that reflects not only cultural traditions but also new forms of social subjectivity (Lakoff G., 1987). The theoretical and linguistic study of this concept requires an interdisciplinary approach combining cognitive linguistics, gender studies, media linguistics, and cultural studies, since it is at the intersection of these fields that contemporary interpretations of female

identity are formed (Cameron D., 2007; Butler J., 1990).

Traditionally, the concept of "woman" has been viewed as a culturally loaded structure comprising conceptual, figurative, and value components. In the 21st century, however, its content is undergoing substantial changes. The conceptual component is expanding due to the emergence of new social roles related to professional selfrealization, leadership, digital participation, and involvement in global communication processes. The figurative component is also being transformed: whereas earlier stereotypical visual and symbolic models dominated, today they are being

replaced by multilayered, hybrid, and variable images shaped by the media environment (Gill R., 2007). The value component of the concept is becoming more dynamic, reflecting democratization processes, the strengthening of female agency, and growing attention to issues of equality and representation (Butler J., 1990; McRobbie A., 2009).

Digital media culture plays a decisive role in actualizing the concept of “woman”. Social networks, video platforms, news aggregators, and online communities create new discursive spaces in which a woman is not merely an object of description but an active subject of meaning production. In the digital environment, new models of female identity are emerging: the professional woman, the womanleader, the influencer woman, the activist woman, and the contentcreator woman. These models are not only fixed by language but are actively constructed through discursive practices such as selfpresentation, visual storytelling, public statements, and participation in social movements (Analytical articles from BBC News, The Guardian, Meduza (2019–2025)).

Language thus becomes a tool for forming and disseminating new meanings related to female subjectivity. Modern media discourses demonstrate a tendency toward the desexualization and depaternalization of language, which is reflected in the choice of nominations, metaphorical models, and communicative strategies. Women are increasingly described through professional qualities, competence, and leadership abilities rather than traditional gender roles. In public communication, the use of diminutive forms, emotionally colored epithets, and paternalistic expressions is decreasing. Instead, neutral, equal, and functional nominations are becoming more common, emphasizing the social significance of women’s participation in various spheres of life (Butler J., 1990).

The cognitive aspect of studying the concept of “woman” involves analyzing mental structures that shape ideas about femininity. These structures are becoming more flexible and open, influenced by global cultural processes. Female identity is no longer static or unambiguous; it becomes hybrid, multilayered, and intersecting with professional, ethnocultural, digital, and social identities. As a result, the concept of “woman” acquires the

properties of dynamism, polyfunctionality, and interdiscursivity.

The linguocultural approach makes it possible to identify differences in the representation of the concept across cultural traditions. In Eastern cultures, emphasis is placed on family roles and harmony; in Western cultures – on individualism and professional selfrealization; in the post Soviet space, a synthesis of traditional and modernist models is observed. However, digital media culture gradually smooths out these differences, forming global discourses of femininity in which local features intertwine with universal trends. Modern research pays special attention to metaphorical models of the concept of “woman”. Whereas earlier metaphors of care, gentleness, and emotionality prevailed, today metaphors reflecting activity, strength, strategy, and innovation are increasingly used.

Women are metaphorically described as creators, leaders, navigators, and architects of change. These metaphors capture new social expectations and value orientations associated with the expansion of female agency. Contemporary literature actively participates in rethinking the concept of “woman”. In the works of Olga Tokarchuk, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Lyudmila Ulitskaya, female identity is portrayed as a multilayered structure encompassing personal, cultural, and social dimensions. For example, in Ulitskaya’s novel *Sincerely Yours, Shurik*, female characters demonstrate diverse life strategies, and the author emphasizes their ability to make independent choices and resist social expectations (Tokarchuk O., 2014).

In Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, the heroine transitions from a suppressed role to active subjectivity, which is reflected in her speech strategies: from silence to confident statements. This illustrates how language captures internal transformations of female identity. Artistic texts of the 21st century often employ metaphors of power, movement, and creation. Women are described as “architects of their own destiny”, “navigators in a complex world”, and “growth points”, reflecting new social expectations and value orientations.

Modern journalism also plays an important role in shaping new models of female identity. Analytical materials published by

BBC, The Guardian, Meduza, and other outlets increasingly portray women as experts, opinion leaders, and participants in political processes. Articles about women scientists, doctors, and entrepreneurs emphasize their professional competence rather than traditional roles. In news coverage of social movements – for example, campaigns against violence – women appear as active agents, organizers, and initiators of change. The language of such materials is characterized by neutrality, respect, and the rejection of paternalistic constructions (McRobbie A., 2009).

Another important dimension in the study of the concept of “woman” is the analysis of communicative practices that shape female identity in various types of discourse. In institutional discourse – political, medical, educational – the representation of women is often regulated by formal norms, professional standards, and role expectations. Here, the linguistic image of a woman is constructed through terminology, official nominations, and genrespecific communicative strategies. In contrast, everyday discourse, including interpersonal communication and informal digital interaction, demonstrates greater variability and emotional expressiveness. It is in these contexts that linguistic markers of solidarity, support, and shared experience emerge, contributing to the formation of collective female identity.

In contemporary digital communication, multimodality plays a decisive role: text is combined with images, emojis, audio messages, and short videos, creating complex semiotic structures. These multimodal practices significantly influence the conceptualization of “woman”, as visual and auditory elements often reinforce or challenge linguistic meanings. For example, visual narratives on social media may emphasize empowerment, professionalism, or activism, while com-

ments and captions provide interpretative frameworks that shape public perception. The interaction between linguistic and non-linguistic signs expands the boundaries of the concept, making it more dynamic and contextdependent.

Furthermore, the study of the concept of “woman” requires attention to sociolinguistic variables such as age, social status, professional sphere, and cultural background. Women from different generations construct their identities through distinct linguistic strategies: younger women tend to use digital slang, hybrid forms, and globalized vocabulary, while older generations rely on more traditional linguistic norms. Professional discourse also influences identity construction: women in science, medicine, or public administration often adopt terminology and communication styles that emphasize expertise and authority. These sociolinguistic differences demonstrate that the concept of “woman” is not homogeneous but consists of multiple subconcepts shaped by social experience and communicative practices.

Thus, the theoretical and linguistic study of the concept of “woman” in the context of 21st century digital media culture reveals profound changes in the structure of modern society. The concept becomes dynamic, multilayered, and culturally significant, reflecting the transformation of gender roles, the strengthening of female agency, and the emergence of new identity models. Language, as the primary means of fixing and constructing meanings, plays a key role in these processes, providing representation of new social realities and cultural trends. Today, the study of the concept of “woman” is not only a linguistic task but also an essential element of analyzing contemporary sociocultural changes, making this topic highly relevant for humanitarian scholarship.

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© Saidova M. E.
Contact: Science_7777@mail.ru



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SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AZERBAIJANI LANGUAGE: EMERGING TRENDS IN YOUTH COMMUNICATION

*Nilgun Mammadova*¹

¹ Azerbaijan Technological University

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Abstract

Social media is a principal environment in which young Azerbaijanis produce and evaluate language. Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, YouTube, and messaging applications encourage rapid, informal, multimodal interaction, affecting vocabulary, spelling, style, and language choice. Through a qualitative review of sociolinguistic research and recurrent patterns in public on-line discourse, this article examines borrowing, code-switching, orthographic simplification, abbreviations, expressive spelling, and emojis. These practices show creativity and adaptation, but unstable spelling, borrowing, and weak register awareness may affect standard writing. A balanced response should combine digital literacy, accessible terminology resources, and attractive Azerbaijani-language content. Social media is not replacing Azerbaijani; it is creating a dynamic digital register whose long-term influence depends on education, technology, and users' choices.

Keywords: *Azerbaijani language, social media, youth communication, digital discourse, code-switching, language change*

1. Introduction

Digital communication has changed not only how information is distributed but also how language is created and socially valued. For many young people, everyday writing now occurs more frequently in comments, captions, group chats, and short videos than in letters or extended formal texts. These platforms reward speed, visibility, emotional impact, and interaction. Consequently, users shorten words, combine languages, imitate speech, employ visual symbols, and develop expressions that can spread through a peer

group within hours. Social media thus functions simultaneously as a communication channel, an informal learning environment, and a laboratory of linguistic innovation.

This article aims to identify the main tendencies through which social media is influencing contemporary Azerbaijani youth communication and to consider their cultural and educational implications. The study asks three questions: Which linguistic features are becoming prominent? What social purposes do they serve? How can institutions support standard Azerbaijani without

suppressing natural linguistic creativity? Rather than treating every new form as an error, the discussion distinguishes temporary digital fashion from changes that may become established in wider usage.

2. Methodological Approach

The article uses a qualitative, literature-based sociolinguistic approach. It synthesizes research on computer-mediated communication, multilingual practices, and code-switching, with special attention to studies concerning Azerbaijan. It also considers recurring phenomena visible in public Azerbaijani-language social media, such as mixed-language captions, non-standard Latin spelling, compressed words, hashtags, emojis, and conversational particles. These examples are treated as illustrative patterns, not as a statistically representative corpus. This limitation is deliberate: reliable claims about frequency would require a platform-specific dataset, ethical procedures, demographic information, and systematic coding.

3. Lexical Innovation and Borrowing

Vocabulary is the most visible area of transformation. English-derived words connected with platforms and digital culture enter Azerbaijani rapidly: post, story, reel, trend, like, follower, blogger, content, challenge, and hashtag are common examples. Some are adapted through Azerbaijani grammatical endings, producing hybrid but structurally integrated forms such as “postu paylaşmaq,” “storyyə baxmaq,” or “like etmək.” Such constructions show that borrowed roots can be absorbed into Azerbaijani morphology and syntax rather than remaining completely foreign elements.

Borrowing is not automatically harmful. Languages have always expanded through contact, and new technologies often arrive together with new terminology. The concern arises when a foreign word replaces a clear and familiar Azerbaijani equivalent merely because it appears more fashionable or prestigious. Parallel use of “content” and “məzmun,” for example, may enrich stylistic choice, but habitual preference for the foreign form can gradually reduce the visibility of the native term. Terminological inconsistency also creates difficulties for education,

public communication, search systems, and language technologies.

4. Code-Switching and Hybrid Identity

Code-switching, the alternation between languages within a conversation or utterance, is a central feature of multilingual digital discourse. Research in Azerbaijan indicates that education, social environment, and identity are important factors in language switching (Soltanova, 2023). In youth communication, Azerbaijani may provide the grammatical frame while English, Russian, or Turkish supplies a phrase associated with humour, emotion, professional knowledge, or popular culture. Switching can mark membership in an urban, educated, global, or platform-specific community.

However, frequent switching may become problematic when speakers cannot retrieve Azerbaijani equivalents or maintain one language consistently in formal contexts. The essential distinction is between choice and dependency. Deliberate switching demonstrates communicative repertoire; involuntary switching caused by limited vocabulary may indicate a competence gap. Language education should help students recognize this difference and select a register appropriate to academic, professional, and informal situations.

5. Orthography, Abbreviation, and Expressive Writing

Speed-oriented communication encourages orthographic simplification. Azerbaijani-specific characters such as “ə,” “ı,” “ş,” “ç,” “ğ,” and “ö” may be replaced by more accessible keyboard forms, particularly when users type on devices configured for another language. Punctuation and capitalization are often omitted, vowels may be reduced, and common phrases are compressed. Repetition of letters, capitals, and punctuation can compensate for the absence of voice: an extended vowel may signal excitement, while multiple question marks may express surprise or impatience.

The risk appears when informal habits transfer automatically to university assignments, official correspondence, or workplace communication. Students who rarely produce extended texts may have difficulty orga-

nizing arguments, applying punctuation, or maintaining stylistic consistency. The solution is not to prohibit digital language but to develop register awareness. Young people should be able to write creatively in a private chat and accurately in an academic paper, understanding that these are different communicative tasks.

6. From Private Interaction to Public Performance

Algorithms add another dimension. Forms that generate engagement are repeated more often, regardless of their conformity to linguistic norms. Catchphrases, provocative spellings, and simplified constructions may gain visibility because they are memorable and searchable. Hashtags also reshape word boundaries by combining expressions into searchable units. In this environment, linguistic prestige is no longer determined only by schools, publishers, or professional media; popular creators and peer communities participate directly in establishing usage.

This democratization has positive consequences. Regional vocabulary, accents, humour, and previously underrepresented voices can gain public space. Azerbaijani can be used for educational videos, science communication, civic discussion, and creative storytelling. Digital platforms therefore offer opportunities for language development as well as pressure from globally dominant languages. UNESCO's Global Roadmap for Multilingualism in the Digital Era emphasizes that equitable digital participation requires technologies and content that support linguistic diversity (UNESCO, 2025).

7. Educational and Language-Policy Implications

Universities can address this challenge through critical digital language education. Azerbaijani-language courses should include authentic online examples and ask students to compare a chat message, public post, news

text, and academic paragraph. Activities can examine when borrowing is necessary, how code-switching changes tone, how punctuation prevents ambiguity, and how the same message should be adapted for different audiences. Such analysis transforms social media from a perceived threat into relevant teaching material.

Language institutions and technology companies also have important roles. Open, regularly updated terminology databases can provide accessible Azerbaijani equivalents for emerging concepts. High-quality spell-checkers, predictive keyboards, speech recognition, and machine translation can make correct Azerbaijani easier rather than slower to use. Public institutions, universities, and media organizations should produce appealing digital content in natural contemporary Azerbaijani. A language is strengthened not simply through correction, but through active use in domains that matter to younger generations.

8. Conclusion

Social media is transforming Azerbaijani youth communication at lexical, orthographic, and stylistic levels. Borrowing and code-switching connect users with global culture, while abbreviations, expressive spelling, and emojis make interaction faster. Yet unstable spelling and the transfer of informal habits into formal writing create educational concerns.

Digital practices do not signal the disappearance of Azerbaijani; they reveal its adaptation to new conditions. The central question is whether speakers can choose appropriately among registers and whether technologies adequately support the language. Cooperation among educators, linguists, institutions, developers, and creators can preserve standard competence while allowing innovation. If Azerbaijani is convenient, expressive, and prestigious online, social media can become a powerful space for its continued development.

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© Mammadova N.
Contact: n_memmedova@atu.edu.az



Section 3. General questions of philology and linguistics

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THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL LEXICAL-SEMANTIC DEVICES IN AZERBAIJANI NEWS NARRATIVES

*Abdullayeva Hajar*¹

¹ The Academy of Public Administration under the President
of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the investigation of the role of emotional lexical-semantic devices in texts published on Azerbaijani-language electronic news platforms and their influence on audience perception. The primary objective of the study is to systematically identify the emotional lexical-semantic devices employed in Azerbaijani electronic news media and to analyze their impact on the formation of public opinion, the shaping of emotional responses, and the interpretation of news texts. The theoretical foundation of the research is based on contemporary studies in the fields of media framing, emotional discourse, and lexical-semantic analysis.

The findings reveal that metaphors, emotionally charged lexical units, evaluative adjectives, intensifiers, and persuasive expressions function as the principal mechanisms of emotional framing in news discourse. These devices contribute to the generation and reinforcement of emotions such as anxiety, fear, sympathy, hope, pride, and disappointment among audiences. Consequently, the study confirms that emotional lexical-semantic devices function not only as linguistic units in news discourse but also as important mechanisms of persuasion, ideological influence, and meaning construction.

Keywords: *news discourse, emotional lexical-semantic devices, media framing, emotional language, public opinion, Azerbaijani-language digital media, discourse analysis*

Introduction

Emotional language in news media functions as a powerful tool for shaping public perception. As noted in numerous studies, “media outlets go beyond merely providing

information to a broad audience and also contribute to the development of specific ideological views and movements within society” (Absattar, A., Mambetova, M., & Zhubay, 2022: 3). By employing lexical

units that convey emotional value, journalists transform neutral reporting into an effective instrument for constructing cultural frameworks and collective identity. Accordingly, the primary objective of the research presented in this article is to systematically classify emotional lexical-semantic devices in Azerbaijani-language news media in order to understand how news media modulate political discourse and influence public sentiment.

Research conducted in this field demonstrates “the relevance of lexical-semantic analysis in political communication by revealing how specific lexical resources and semantic prosodies are strategically employed to enhance public awareness and mobilize public engagement around the most pressing political issues of the contemporary world” (Abdullayeva, 2025). By examining the linguistic examples selected for analysis according to a unified principle, the study, as it were, “reveals the mechanisms that journalists use and exploit for modulation purposes in order to foreground national or political agendas” (Koivunen et al., 2021).

Drawing on the most recent scholarly research on this topic, we aim to reveal how linguistic structures that generate effects such as anxiety and anticipation among broad audiences are integrated into wider ideological frameworks. This is because the analysis of such linguistic structures identifies the interaction between affective orientation and cognitive evaluations and, as R. Guchlu notes, “reveals how media narratives manipulate public perceptions of power and social welfare” (Güclü, 2026).

The significance of emotional framing in online communication has been highlighted in various scholarly studies and research works. For example, while examining the characteristics of virtual discourse, K. Habibova emphasizes that despite the limited availability of non-verbal means of communication in the online environment, the emotional component does not disappear entirely. According to the author, “the emotional component is present to some degree in all spheres where the human factor exists” (Habibova, 2023: 174), and therefore it would be incorrect to claim its complete absence. From this perspective, emotional framing in online communication serves as

an important element in fostering mutual understanding, shaping interpersonal relationships, and enhancing the effectiveness of information exchange among participants. Furthermore, the study notes that virtual discourse makes extensive use of strategies aimed at “shaping the emotional state of the addressee” (Habibova, 2023: 175), as well as persuasion and influence, which demonstrates the distinctive role of emotional factors in digital communication.

It should be noted that media narratives are not merely informative; they are also enriched with emotional appeals designed to shape public attitudes and participation through the deliberate selection of lexical-semantic devices. As scholars have observed, “the more relevant a social issue is, the more vividly it is presented in the mass media, and the more frequently emotional appeals are employed to attract the audience’s attention, stimulate interest, and influence attitudes toward the issue” (Ünal-Aydın et al, 2020: 50). Research on the language of digital media further suggests that “the comprehension and interpretation of news texts by audiences are significantly influenced by emotional lexical-semantic factors such as intensifiers, affective adjectives, and emotionally charged nouns. These components affect how information is cognitively processed and emotionally evaluated at both lexical and pragmatic levels” (Boulianne et al, 2022: 149). Such findings further underscore the importance of investigating lexical-semantic devices in electronic news media as a means of understanding public opinion and audience response.

Literature Review

Research in the fields of media and communication demonstrates that lexical-semantic choices and framing strategies employed in news texts significantly influence the ways audiences perceive events, their emotional responses, and the formation of public behavior. As has been rightly observed, “contemporary media discourse does not merely perform the function of transmitting information; it also creates specific interpretative frameworks for events and shapes emotional evaluations” (Macagno & Walton, 2014; Koivunen et al., 2021). From this perspective, news texts are not regard-

ed as neutral representations of social reality but rather as communicative spaces in which ideological and emotional meanings are constructed.

A. Absattar, M. Mambetova and O. Zhubay (2022) argue that emotional expressions used in the media “influence readers’ comprehension of textual content and provide a particular direction for the evaluation of events.” Similar conclusions are presented by W. Chung and D. Zeng (2020) in their study of user behavior within social media communities. The authors note that emotional content affects both user interactions and the dissemination of information. Likewise, Y. Ge et al. (2020) emphasize that emotions in social media are not limited to positive and negative categories; rather, different emotional nuances generate distinct patterns of behavior.

Framing theory also constitutes one of the principal approaches for explaining the impact of media content on audiences. R. Nabi, A. Gustafson, and R. Jensen (2018) demonstrate that the presentation of events within specific frames shapes audiences’ emotional reactions and behavioral intentions. Investigating communication strategies related to climate change, Y. Wang, X. Li, and S. Zhou (2024) provide evidence that the frames employed directly influence emotional responses as well as intentions to engage in online activities. Similarly, S. O’Neill and S. Nicholson-Cole (2009) observe that threat-oriented frames in news coverage and visual materials may sometimes foster passivity among audiences, whereas positive and constructive frames tend to encourage higher levels of public engagement.

The lexical-semantic aspects of media framing have also been reflected in studies conducted across a variety of subject areas. Investigating the construction of agency in climate change discourse, N. Kramar (2023) demonstrates that specific lexical units and metaphors serve to present the causes of events and the parties responsible for them in different ways. Such findings suggest that lexical-semantic choices play a crucial role in shaping audience interpretations of social and political issues.

The influence of emotional discourse in social media environments has emerged as a distinct area of research. S. Boulianne et

al. (2022), in their study of the international youth climate protest movement, found that social media functions as an important platform for emotional mobilization and collective action. Similarly, T. Taufek et al. (2021), using sentiment analysis to examine public attitudes toward climate change, concluded that emotional content plays a significant role in shaping public opinion. The study conducted by Ünal-Aydın et al. (2020) further revealed a relationship between individuals’ emotional perception abilities and their patterns of social media use.

In recent years, the relationship between emotional language and discourse manipulation has also attracted considerable scholarly attention. K. Habibova (2025), examining framing and priming mechanisms in artificial intelligence-based dialogue systems, argues that lexical choices and presentation strategies can direct users’ perceptions and decision-making processes. Likewise, N. Mammadli and K. Habibova (2025), through a psychometric analysis of the interaction between academic communication and discourse manipulation, highlight the persuasive potential of emotional and evaluative language. K. Habibova’s (2023) research on virtual discourse likewise demonstrates the important role of emotional components and persuasive strategies within digital communication environments.

Thus, the existing body of literature demonstrates that emotional lexical-semantic devices constitute an integral component of media discourse. These devices serve not only to describe events but also to shape audiences’ emotional responses, influence the construction of public opinion, and encourage particular patterns of behavior. Through the strategic use of emotionally charged vocabulary, evaluative expressions, metaphors, and framing techniques, media texts can direct attention toward specific aspects of reality, assign significance to certain issues, and influence how audiences interpret social and political developments. Consequently, the study of emotional lexical-semantic mechanisms provides valuable insights into the ways media discourse contributes to the formation of collective perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions in contemporary digital and information environments.

Methods and Materials

Within the framework of this study, a corpus of news articles was compiled from leading Azerbaijani electronic news agencies for linguistic analysis. The selection criteria included the popularity and accessibility of news platforms, the relevance of the selected articles to contemporary social, political, economic, and cultural issues, and a particular emphasis on headlines, lead paragraphs, and evaluative sections. To this end, special attention was given to news texts exhibiting a high degree of emotional and evaluative language.

The collected materials were examined to identify recurring emotional lexical-semantic devices, including emotionally marked vocabulary, evaluative lexical units, metaphorical expressions, intensifiers, and other linguistic resources contributing to emotional framing within news narratives. For this purpose, the study employs discourse analysis, descriptive analysis, and comparative-descriptive methods as its principal linguistic research approaches. These methods facilitate the systematic identification and classification of emotional lexical-semantic patterns and enable an assessment of their role in shaping the communicative and persuasive functions of contemporary news discourse.

Results and Discussion

Lexical framing, owing to its inherently ideological overtones, directly influences the perception and interpretation of information. As K. Habibova emphasizes, when presenting information, “both lexical framing and the tonality of expressions are employed, which may distort interpretations and direct the user’s opinion in a particular direction.” (Habibova, 2023: 173) The researcher further notes that presenting the same information through different words and expressions affects users’ decision-making processes, since “one and the same piece of information may evoke different reactions depending on the way it is presented.” (Heydarov et al., 2019: 795) Therefore, lexical framing is regarded as one of the most effective instruments for guiding audiences toward particular viewpoints, especially within socio-political, ideological, and media discourse.

In recent years, frequently occurring examples in Azerbaijani news discourse have

included metaphorical expressions such as “ölkənin gələcəyinə açılan qapı” (“a gateway to the country’s future”), “iqtisadiyyatın lokomotivi” (“the locomotive of the economy”), “regionun qaynar nöqtəsi” (“the region’s hotspot”), and “tarixi zəfərin memarları” (“the architects of a historic victory”). Evaluative adjectives such as *critical*, *sensitive*, *important*, *unprecedented*, *historic*, *complex*, and *remarkable* have reinforced the emotional impact of news reports and guided readers toward particular interpretations of events. Likewise, expressions emphasizing unity, social responsibility, national progress, and collective effort – such as “milli həmrəylik” (“national solidarity”), “birgə səyahət” (“a shared journey”), “ölkənin inkişaf yolunda vacib addım” (“an important step on the country’s path to development”), and “xalqın iradəsinin təntənəsi” (“the triumph of the people’s will”)—have been widely employed to generate positive emotional responses and strengthen audience engagement.

Within this discourse, headlines containing emotionally charged vocabulary tend to attract greater attention and are particularly effective in shaping readers’ perceptions of the significance and urgency of reported events. Headlines such as “Regionda gərginlik artır” (“Tensions Escalate in the Region”), “Tarixi qərar qəbul edildi” (“A Historic Decision Has Been Adopted”), “Milli təhsil üçün ciddi təhdid” (“A Serious Threat to National Education”), and “Ölkə üçün yeni inkişaf mərhələsi başlayır” (“A New Stage of Development Begins for the Country”) illustrate the use of emotionally loaded lexical units designed to capture audience attention. News reports highlighting social challenges, crises, or conflicts tend to evoke feelings of concern and anxiety, whereas stories focused on achievements, development initiatives, and positive social change frequently generate emotions of hope and optimism. Consequently, emotional lexical-semantic devices function not merely as linguistic resources but also as mechanisms through which media narratives shape public perception and audience engagement.

Positively framed narratives containing expressions such as “uğurlu inkişaf modeli” (“a successful development model”), “tarixi nailiyyət” (“a historic achievement”), and “gələcəyə inamla addımlayan Azərbaycan”

(“Azerbaijan confidently advancing toward the future”) inspire a sense of civic engagement and social responsibility. Conversely, negatively framed reports employing expressions such as “artan təhdid” (“an increasing threat”), “dərinləşən böhran” (“a deepening crisis”), and “narahatlıq doğuran vəziyyət” (“a cause for concern”) encourage a more critical perception of existing social, political, and economic challenges.

The analysis of the collected linguistic material demonstrates that emotional lexical-semantic devices play a significant role in Azerbaijani news narratives by shaping audience perceptions, strengthening emotional engagement, and influencing attitudes toward contemporary issues. The findings of this study confirm that lexical-semantic choices in news discourse function not merely as means of linguistic expression but also as important mechanisms of persuasion and meaning construction.

Azerbaijani electronic media employ a wide range of emotional lexical-semantic devices to influence audience perceptions and evoke emotional responses. Emotions such as anxiety, fear, sympathy, hope, pride, and disappointment are frequently activated through specific lexical choices and framing strategies. Although negatively oriented emotional appeals often attract immediate attention and emphasize the significance of social, political, or economic issues, their excessive use may contribute to emotional fatigue, anxiety, and audience disengagement. In contrast, positively framed narratives and solution-oriented messages tend to exert

a stronger motivational effect, particularly among younger audiences, encouraging civic awareness, social participation, and constructive engagement with public affairs.

These findings suggest that a balanced use of emotional lexical-semantic devices may be more effective in sustaining audience interest and engagement than an overreliance on negative emotional appeals. Accordingly, the strategic deployment of emotional language within news discourse should be viewed not only as a means of attracting attention but also as a communicative practice capable of shaping public attitudes, fostering civic participation, and influencing the broader social interpretation of contemporary events.

Conclusion

The analytical framework is based on the assumption that lexical-semantic choices constitute one of the principal mechanisms through which emotions are constructed, intensified, and communicated in news discourse. Within this model, emotional lexical-semantic devices are classified into several categories, including metaphors, evaluative lexical units, emotionally charged vocabulary, and persuasive expressions. These categories correspond to the dominant emotional responses identified among readers, such as anxiety, sympathy, hope, pride, and disappointment. Through their strategic deployment, such linguistic resources contribute to the emotional framing of news narratives and influence the ways in which audiences perceive, interpret, and evaluate contemporary events and social realities.

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Contact: aa_hecer@yahoo.com



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THE IMPORTANCE OF LEXICAL MEANS IN THE FORMATION OF MEDIA NEWS DISCOURSE

Monsumova Mehriban Nazim kyzy¹

¹ Azerbaijan Sports Academy, Azerbaijan

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Abstract

Media news discourse, as one of the main communicative domains that conveys information to society, is characterized by specific linguistic features. Lexical means play a significant role in the formation of this discourse. The choice of words used in news texts, including terminology, socio-political vocabulary, evaluative expressions, and emotionally colored words, determines how information is presented to the audience. Through lexical means, events can be described more clearly, accurately, and effectively, while also shaping whether the news is delivered in a more objective or subjective manner. Lexical units employed in media discourse not only ensure the clarity and promptness of information but also serve to attract the audience's attention and contribute to the formation of public opinion. In particular, when covering current socio-political events, journalists widely use terminological vocabulary, metaphorical expressions, and evaluative lexical elements. These linguistic devices enrich the semantic content of the news and enhance its communicative impact.

Keywords: *media discourse, news text, lexical means, socio-political vocabulary, communicative impact*

Introduction

The media environment constitutes one of the central spheres of communication in contemporary society, playing a significant role in the production, circulation, and interpretation of information. News discourse is not limited to reporting events; it also contributes to the formation of public opinion and the social interpretation of political, economic, and cultural realities. Within this process, lexical choice is particularly important, as words, terms, expressions, and lexical constructions shape both the infor-

mational content of news and its evaluative dimension.

Lexical units in media discourse operate in close interaction with social, political, and cultural contexts. Habibova (2019b) emphasizes the relationship between linguistic choice and the sociopolitical context of communication, demonstrating that language in political communication functions not merely as a means of transmitting information but also as an instrument of communicative influence. From this perspective, terminology, metaphors, evaluative vocabulary, and other

lexical resources may contribute to particular representations and interpretations of political and social events.

The complexity of these processes requires an interdisciplinary approach to media language. As Tuktayeva (2023) notes, contemporary media-text analysis draws on cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, critical linguistics, functional stylistics, pragmatics, rhetorical criticism, and linguoculturology. The integration of these approaches makes it possible to examine media discourse at several interconnected levels, including its semantic structure, communicative functions, ideological dimensions, and sociocultural context. Such methodological diversity is particularly relevant because media texts simultaneously reflect linguistic choices and broader social processes.

Within this interdisciplinary framework, the present study focuses specifically on the lexical dimension of media news discourse. Particular attention is given to word choice, international vocabulary, terminology, evaluative and expressive lexis, metaphors, and recurrent lexical combinations. These resources perform more than an informative function: they contribute to framing events, constructing evaluative meanings, and shaping the communicative and ideological orientation of news. Investigating their functional and semantic characteristics is therefore essential for understanding how contemporary media discourse constructs and communicates representations of social and political reality.

Research Methods

Several complementary methods are employed in this study. Discourse analysis is used to examine how lexical choices function in news texts and contribute to their communicative and ideological meanings. Lexical-semantic analysis focuses on the meanings and contextual functions of words and expressions, particularly international vocabulary, terminology, and stable word combinations. The comparative method is applied to identify similarities and differences in lexical choices across newspapers and online news platforms, especially in reports covering the same or similar events. Finally, the descriptive method is used to classify the observed lexical patterns and present the findings sys-

tematically. Together, these methods provide a comprehensive framework for examining the functional and semantic characteristics of lexical units in media news discourse.

Results

The impact of news is closely related to the linguistic choices through which events are represented. Bell (1991) emphasizes the importance of lexical and grammatical selection in the construction of news discourse, suggesting that linguistic form is integral to the representation and interpretation of events. From this perspective, word choice, syntactic structure, and evaluative language are not merely stylistic features but important components of media framing. The same event may therefore acquire different semantic and evaluative dimensions depending on how it is linguistically constructed.

This tendency is particularly evident in international coverage of political and economic events. Expressions such as “*Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has reshaped the geopolitical landscape of Europe and intensified global security concerns*” (The Washington Post, 2022) and “*Western allies imposed new sanctions as geopolitical tensions continued to escalate*” (The Guardian, 2022) illustrate how lexical units such as *geopolitical landscape*, *sanctions*, and *security concerns* situate events within broader political and security frameworks. Such choices perform not only an informative but also an interpretative function by foregrounding particular dimensions of the reported events.

Corpus-based research provides further support for this argument. Hameed et al. (2020) demonstrate that recurrent lexical patterns in media discourse contribute to particular representations of political and social realities. Habibova (2025), from a related perspective, examines the manipulative potential of linguistic units in political discourse and shows how strategically selected expressions may acquire persuasive and evaluative functions in specific communicative contexts. Although political and news discourse are not identical, both demonstrate the capacity of lexical choice to frame events and influence their interpretation. Lexical selection can therefore be regarded as a significant mechanism through which media

discourse constructs, evaluates, and communicates social and political realities.

Terms such as *sanctions*, *geopolitical tensions*, *economic crisis*, and *diplomatic efforts* contribute to the political and ideological framing of news rather than merely describing events. This can be observed in expressions such as “*Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has reshaped the geopolitical landscape of Europe*” (The Washington Post, 2022), “*Western allies have imposed sweeping sanctions on Russia in response to the invasion*” (BBC News, 2023), and “*European leaders warned that rising geopolitical tensions could threaten global security*” (The Guardian, 2022). Lexical units such as *geopolitical landscape*, *sanctions*, and *global security* place the reported events within broader political and security frameworks, illustrating how recurrent lexical strategies contribute to the discursive construction of news.

Lexical framing may also interact with intertextuality in constructing ideological meaning. Zhang (2019) argues that intertextual relations in media discourse contribute to the formation of ideological positions and may influence readers’ interpretations of events. References to official statements, previous reports, quotations, and other texts establish connections between current news and already existing discourses. These connections provide readers with a broader interpretative framework while simultaneously foregrounding particular perspectives. Intertextuality can therefore be regarded as an important discursive mechanism through which media texts construct meaning, reproduce ideological positions, and potentially influence public perception.

Boyko (2023) associates lexical innovation in contemporary media discourse with changing political, social, and technological realities. Global events such as armed conflicts, pandemics, economic crises, and technological developments introduce new concepts into public communication and may also increase the frequency or modify the contextual meanings of existing lexical units. As one of the principal channels of public communication, the media plays an important role in disseminating such vocabulary and integrating it into broader public discourse. The international coverage of the

Russia–Ukraine war provides a relevant example. Expressions such as *geopolitical tensions*, *energy crisis*, and *information warfare* have become particularly prominent in reporting on the conflict. In the statement “*Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has triggered a global energy crisis and intensified geopolitical tensions*” (The Guardian, 2022), the expressions *energy crisis* and *geopolitical tensions* connect the military conflict with its wider economic and political consequences. Similarly, *information warfare* conceptualizes information and communication as integral dimensions of contemporary conflict. These expressions should not necessarily be regarded as newly created lexical units; rather, their increased frequency and context-specific meanings demonstrate how existing vocabulary can acquire renewed relevance in response to major global events. Media discourse therefore functions not only as a space in which lexical innovations emerge and circulate but also as an environment in which established lexical units undergo semantic actualization and become associated with new political and social realities.

According to Ozyumenko (2017), in the context of information warfare, media discourse functions as an important means of ideological influence and public opinion formation. The selection of facts and lexical resources, the formulation of headlines, and the organization of commentary may all contribute to particular representations of political realities. From this perspective, media discourse functions not merely as a channel of information but also as a mechanism of ideological framing.

This tendency can be observed in international news coverage of the war in Ukraine. For example, the statement “*Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has reshaped the geopolitical landscape of Europe and intensified global security concerns*” (The Washington Post, 2022) frames the conflict within a broader geopolitical and security context. Similarly, the expression “*Western allies increased sanctions against Russia amid escalating geopolitical tensions*” (The Guardian, 2022) employs politically marked lexical units such as *Western allies*, *sanctions*, and *geopolitical tensions*. Such lexical choices extend the representation of the conflict beyond its military

dimension and situate it within a wider political and ideological framework. In this way, lexical selection contributes to the framing of events and may influence how readers interpret their significance.

It is evident that media discourse in the context of information warfare performs not only an informative function but also ideological and communicative functions. The lexical resources used in news language, particularly international terminology and evaluative expressions, may influence public opinion and contribute to the interpretation of events within particular ideological frameworks. As Habibova (2019b) demonstrates in her analysis of political communication, linguistic choices are closely related to the social and political context in which communication takes place. This relationship becomes particularly significant in media discourse, where lexical choices may affect how political events and actors are represented. International vocabulary occupies an important place among the lexical resources of contemporary media discourse. In the context of globalization, political, economic, and social developments increasingly cross-national boundaries, which encourages the frequent use of internationally recognizable terms in news reporting. Words such as *policy*, *strategy*, *diplomacy*, *conflict*, *sanctions*, *cooperation*, and *integration* are regularly encountered in reports dealing with international affairs. Similarly, combinations such as *geopolitical tensions*, *political landscape*, *economic crisis*, and *security policy* contribute to the terminological representation of global political and economic processes.

At the same time, media language is not limited to neutral terminology. Evaluative vocabulary, emotionally marked expressions, and metaphors are also widely employed to emphasize particular aspects of an event. Expressions such as *major breakthrough*, *serious threat*, and *dramatic escalation* introduce an evaluative dimension into news reporting, while metaphorical combinations such as *political storm* and *economic pressure* may intensify the effect of the message. This observation is consistent with Habibova's (2025) study of the manipulative potential of phraseological units in political discourse, which draws attention to the per-

suasive and evaluative functions that linguistic expressions may acquire in a particular communicative context. In media discourse, such lexical choices can similarly contribute to framing events and guiding their interpretation by the audience.

The selection of lexical units in media texts serves both informational and communicative purposes. Journalists employ terminology, international vocabulary, and politically marked expressions to represent social and political events within particular semantic frameworks. Terms such as *geopolitical position*, *humanitarian crisis*, and *diplomatic relations*, for instance, contribute to the terminological precision of news discourse.

A more explicitly evaluative use of language can be observed in the headline "*Təxribat cəhdləri və xəyanət ssenariləri iflasa məhkumdur*" ("Attempts at provocation and scenarios of betrayal are doomed to fail") (Azərbaycan, 2026). The expressions *təxribat cəhdləri* ("attempts at provocation") and *xəyanət ssenariləri* ("scenarios of betrayal") carry strong negative connotations, framing the actions as deliberate and threatening. The expression *iflasa məhkumdur* ("doomed to fail"), in turn, conveys a categorical evaluation rather than a neutral description of events. The headline therefore illustrates how lexical choices can combine informative, evaluative, and persuasive functions. By employing negatively marked and ideologically loaded vocabulary, the text not only reports on an event but also frames its interpretation, potentially shaping the audience's perception and emotional response.

Another example is the headline "*Erməni məkrinin şantajı*" ("Blackmail of Armenian Treachery") (Azərbaycan, 2026). The lexical units *məkr* ("treachery") and *şantaj* ("blackmail") are strongly evaluative and carry distinctly negative connotations. While *məkr* evokes notions of deceit, concealed intentions, and deliberate hostility, *şantaj* implies coercion through pressure or threats. Their combination therefore constructs an explicitly critical and accusatory representation of the event. Such lexical choices demonstrate that media language may function beyond the transmission of factual information. By foregrounding negatively marked meanings, the headline frames the event within a par-

ticular evaluative and ideological perspective and may influence the reader's interpretation of the subject. Thus, emotionally charged lexical units function as important framing devices in media news discourse, contributing to both its persuasive force and ideological orientation.

In addition, expressive lexis plays an important role in media news discourse. Expressive words and phrases determine the emotional tone of news and attract the reader's attention. These lexical tools are particularly used in social and political news to highlight the dramatic or tense nature of events (Habibova, 2019a). Expressions such as "*intense confrontation, sharp reaction, important decision, and historic event*" strengthen the semantic weight of news and facilitate a more impactful presentation of information.

Metaphors and other figurative expressions are also key components of lexical resources in media discourse. Metaphorical expressions help explain complex political and social processes in a simpler and more comprehensible form. For example, phrases such as "*political arena*", "*information warfare*", "*economic pressure*", "*diplomatic bridges*" not only enrich semantics but also increase the impact of the news. These lexical units in media texts perform not only an informative but also an interpretive function.

In the headline "*Dəmir yumruq yerindədir, gücümüzü sınağa çəkməyin*" (*The iron fist is in place, do not test our strength*) (Azərbaycan, 2026), the lexical units carry metaphorical meaning and serve to convey the political message more effectively. The phrase "*The iron fist*" does not have a literal physical meaning but metaphorically represents the state's power, decisiveness, and military-political strength. Such metaphorical expressions help present complex political and social processes in a simpler and more understandable form. Through these figurative expressions, readers grasp the intended message more easily and understand the essence of the events more clearly.

Another important feature of lexical resources in media news discourse is their ideological and pragmatic function. Lexical choice is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also a communicative strategy through which particular aspects of an event may be foreground-

ed or backgrounded. Consequently, the same event can be represented differently across media outlets, producing distinct interpretative frameworks. This can be observed in the statement: "*European leaders have expressed concern over rising geopolitical tensions in the region, emphasizing the need for diplomatic dialogue and international cooperation*" (BBC News, 2023). The expressions *geopolitical tensions*, *diplomatic dialogue*, and *international cooperation* belong to the conventional terminology of political and diplomatic discourse. While they contribute to the formal and relatively restrained register of the report, their function is not entirely descriptive. The combination of *tensions* with *dialogue* and *cooperation* constructs a problem-solution frame in which diplomatic engagement is foregrounded as an appropriate response to political instability. A different lexical configuration appears in *The Washington Post*: "*The United States has already deployed a number of economic measures to hurt Russia, including imposing sanctions on its central bank and on oligarchs close to Putin*" (The Washington Post, 2022). Here, *economic measures*, *sanctions*, *central bank*, and *oligarchs* situate the event within political and economic discourse. Particularly significant is the combination of the relatively institutional term *economic measures* with the verb *hurt*, which explicitly foregrounds the intended effect of these measures on Russia. Thus, the passage combines specialized terminology with evaluatively relevant lexical choices, presenting economic policy as an instrument of political pressure. These examples demonstrate that political and economic terminology in media discourse does more than ensure precision. Through contextual combination and lexical framing, such units contribute to the construction of particular interpretations of events. Their ideological and pragmatic potential therefore emerges not only from the meanings of individual words but also from the semantic relations established between them within the news text.

Conclusion

Lexical resources play a central role in shaping media news discourse, performing not only informative but also interpretative, evaluative, and ideological functions. The analysis demonstrates that lexical choice, terminology,

international vocabulary, metaphors, and emotionally marked expressions influence both the semantic structure of news and the way events are represented and perceived by the audience.

The growing use of international terms such as *policy*, *strategy*, *sanctions*, *cooperation*, *geopolitical tensions*, and *information warfare* reflects the increasingly global nature of contemporary political, economic, and social processes. While terminological vocabulary contributes to precision and an-

alytical clarity, metaphorical and evaluative expressions enhance the interpretative and persuasive potential of media texts.

Thus, lexical resources constitute an essential component of media news discourse, shaping its semantic, stylistic, and communicative dimensions. Their purposeful use contributes not only to effective information transmission but also to the framing and interpretation of events within the contemporary media environment.

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Contact: mehriban.monsumova@sport.edu.az



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ARTISTIC EXPRESSION OF THE AZERBAIJANI NATIONAL IDEOLOGY IN 1990s AZERBAIJANI LITERATURE

Sabuhi Gahramanov¹

¹ Doctor of Philosophy in Philology, Azerbaijan University of Languages

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Abstract

The article discusses the artistic expression of the Azerbaijani national ideology (*Azerbaijanism*) in the literature of the 1990s, which is characterized as the initial stage of the independence period. The literature of the 1990s is regarded as a “transition period” from Soviet literature to independence. Alongside the continuation of Azerbaijanism ideas from the 1960s-1980s, their direct realization in life brought new themes, perspectives, and styles to literature. The study concludes that Azerbaijanism ideology became the main ideological-artistic platform for the newly emerging independence literature, shaping its national identity and facilitating its integration into the world literary process.

Keywords: *Azerbaijani national ideology (Azerbaijanism), 1990s Azerbaijani literature, idea of independence, national identity, artistic thought*

Introduction

The Azerbaijani national ideology, or Azerbaijanism, forms the ideological and artistic core of modern Azerbaijani literature. Its formation, the shaping of the people's worldview, and the active role of literature in achieving state independence are undeniable. The rich examples of Azerbaijani literature across several stages prove this. At the beginning of the 20th century, Romanticism and Realism led to the formation of Turkism and Azerbaijanism, resulting in the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918–1920). Later, despite seventy years of Soviet occupation (1920–1991) attempting to replace national ideology with internationalist slogans, literature played an unparalleled role in preserv-

ing the national spirit, language, traditions, and the ideology of Azerbaijanism. The literature of the 1960s–1980s, in particular, significantly contributed to the reformation of Azerbaijanism and the idea of independence. This legacy determined the dominant position of Azerbaijanism in 1990s literature after the restoration of state sovereignty.

Literary-Theoretical Foundations of Azerbaijanism

Since the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the actualization of Azerbaijani studies has been linked to the Azerbaijanism ideology. During the Soviet era, this process continued secretly, with Azerbaijanism ideals indirectly carried into socialist society. With the crisis

of socialism and the collapse of communist ideals, Azerbaijani values began to surpass socialist values in the 1960s–1980s, and the national ideology gradually strengthened. In the 1990s, Azerbaijani literature continued the previous era's experience while entering a new ideological-artistic stage. The ideas of independence, which began seeping into literature from the 1960s (e.g., Khalil Rza's motifs), branched out widely in the 1990s. As one scholar notes, "Literature, freed from ideological constraints, gained the opportunity to more freely artistically analyze... the traumatic experiences imprinted on the collective memory related to the Karabakh conflict, refugeeism, and the collapse of the imperial system" (Mamurakhon, 2025, P. 542–543).

During independence, the reprinting of works by founders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, such as M.A. Rasulzadeh, played a crucial role in strengthening national ideology and Azerbaijani studies. As N. Shamsizade wrote, "at the beginning of the century, it was precisely Azerbaijanism that was the main idea of independence. Now... Azerbaijanism, which is based on Turkism and Islamism, should also be the foundation of our independence ideology" (Shamsizade, 2008, p. 65). The integrity of literature from the 1960s–1990s is confirmed concerning the concept of nationality. The literature of the 1960s–1980s opposed Soviet ideology with images of national society and culture, guarding national language, history, and moral values. According to T. Alishanoghlu, "the literature of the 1990s largely draws its content from the embodiment of the collapse, bankruptcy, and pains of that ideal, including the Karabakh theme" (Alishanoghlu, 2017, P. 464–465).

Nevertheless, the literature of the independence period is a significant historical event. The Constitutional Act on State Independence of October 18, 1991, "started the development of nationwide, free, and democratic thought... [and] meant the declaration of a new type of literature based on a national-democratic ideology" (Habibbeyli, 2019, p. 326). If in the 1960s–1980s this ideology found its way through indirect means and protests, then in the 1990s it became the direct mouthpiece of independent literary-artistic thought. The 1990s, charac-

terized as a "transition period," saw works across various topics and styles – from poems and novels about the Karabakh war and refugee life to absurd plays and stories about imperial ruins – all united by the Azerbaijanism ideology (Habibbeyli, 2016, p. 260).

Azerbaijanism and the World Literary-Cultural Space

In the 1990s, the purpose of Azerbaijanism carried the mission of creating and introducing the image of an independent Azerbaijan to the world. Simultaneously, there was a need to adopt the humanistic and progressive values of the modern world and integrate into advanced world literature. In literature, these processes continued both in depth (penetrating deep layers of Azerbaijani culture and history) and in breadth (mastering previously banned literary-philosophical heritage). Historical novels and stories by Isa Mughanna, Davud Nasib, Nuraddin Adiloghlu, and others explored ancient roots, creating the image of the Azerbaijani people with rich statehood traditions (Habibbeyli, 2016, p. 260). Plays by Nabi Khazri, Bakhtiyar Vahabzade, and Ilyas Afandiyev evoked national pride through ancient Turkic roots or exposed the Russian Empire's occupation. Heydar Aliyev emphasized the importance of such works for creating patriotism and educating youth (Aliyev, 2023, p. 396).

Journalistic works by Gilman Ilkin and Manaf Suleymanov focused attention on pre-Soviet national life and values. Works by Movlud Suleymanli, Ismayil Shikhli, and many others artistically exposed the repression, deportation, and colonial policies of the seventy-year occupation. Moreover, poetic collections and prose by Vaqif Samadoghlu, Anar, Afag Masud, Elchin, and others not only demonstrated the realities of the post-colonial environment but also helped determine the place of independent Azerbaijan in the modern world. As the country's prestige grew, "this literature, whose ideological basis rests on Azerbaijanism... has, above all, been able to create and introduce to the world the image of modern Azerbaijan" (Habibbeyli, 2016, P. 22–23). Finally, the Turan ideal, based on Turkism and Azerbaijanism, remains relevant, with President Ilham Aliyev shaping the nation's future on

the principle “our family is the Turkic world” (President Ilham Aliyev..., 2024, p. 3).

Conclusion

Thus, the literature of the 1990s in Azerbaijan is distinguished by its “transitional character.” On the one hand, the concept of nationality from the 1960s–1980s continues; on the other hand, the demands of independence reflect the transition of the Azerbaijanism ideology from idea to direct action. The implementation of independence is accompanied by socio-political, psychological, and moral

processes. The expression of Azerbaijanism in literature is directly linked to the people’s struggle for independence. In the 1990s, the literature of independent Azerbaijan simultaneously restored its historical-cultural context, with Turkism and the Turan ideal returning. The direct and unimpeded integration of Azerbaijani literature into the world literary process began. Along with adopting advanced ideas, the Azerbaijanism ideology created an ideological-moral basis for preserving and artistically expressing the national identity and rich values of Azerbaijani literature.

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© Gahramanov S.
Contact: gahramanovsabuhi@gmail.com



Section 4. Languages of the world

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ORIENTALIST DISCOURSE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF PLATO'S TRIAD

*Nurana Nuriyeva*¹

¹ Azerbaijan University of Languages, Azerbaijan

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Abstract

This article examines the formation of American Orientalism as rooted in the European tradition, exploring its connection with literary and philosophical discourses through the framework of Plato's triad. The works of Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, and Kahlil Gibran are comparatively analyzed to reveal how Eastern imagery is presented through the Platonic triad and interpreted within postcolonial theory (Said, Bhabha, Spivak). The study investigates the othering and degradation of Eastern peoples in Irving's historical-literary works and Poe's engagement with Eastern mysticism and Sufi symbolism, thereby uncovering the diverse trajectories of American Orientalism. These approaches have played a significant role in shaping U.S. national identity and transforming European Orientalist discourse.

Keywords: *Orientalism, Plato triad, American literature, discourse, W. Irving, E. A. Poe, K. Gibran*

Introduction

The formation of American Orientalism carries the influence of European scholarly traditions and emerges as a continuation of that discourse within a new cultural-political framework. Philological and historical methods established in Europe during the nineteenth century were transferred to U.S. universities after World War II, where they were further developed in new academic centers (Irwin, 2006; Hourani, 1984). Simultaneously, the growing political interests of the United States in the Middle East – support

for Israel, oil diplomacy, and the fight against communism – transformed this academic tradition into a politicized form (Lockman, 2004; Said, 1978). Thus, American Orientalism constitutes both a continuation of European methodology and the formation of a new ideological framework closely tied to U.S. geopolitical interests.

The literary and philosophical formation of American Orientalism began primarily in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, following American independence (1783) (Said, 1978; Irwin, 2006). Although

influenced by European colonial Orientalism, this formation was directly linked to America's distinctive quest for national identity (Lockman, 2004; Keddie, 1972).

Main Body

The intellectual foundations of American Orientalism rest upon three pillars. The first pillar emerged from the influence of European literature. In the early years of independence, American readers encountered the East primarily through English and French translations, especially texts such as *The Arabian Nights*. Early American writers began imitating this exotic style, depicting the East as a "fairy-tale world" (Irwin, 2006; Said, 1978; Keddie, 1972). The second pillar coincided with the Enlightenment and growing interest in Confucian philosophy. During the eighteenth century, the founding fathers of the United States – Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and others – showed pragmatic interest in Eastern wisdom, particularly Chinese philosophy, viewing it as a means to strengthen the secular and moral values of the new republic (Hourani, 1984). The third pillar was shaped by missionary activity and religious travel in the early nineteenth century. The real institutional foundation of American Orientalism was laid precisely through religious initiatives. Reports written by American missionaries in the Middle East formed the first real, albeit stereotypical, perceptions of the East in American society (Lockman, 2004; Keddie, 1972).

In literary fiction, the initial formal manifestations of this trend took shape in the first half of the nineteenth century through writers such as Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe. They transformed Eastern motifs into essential elements of American Romanticism and Gothic literature (Irwin, 2006). Later, in the 1830s-1840s, the Transcendentalist movement (Emerson and Thoreau) elevated American Orientalism to a philosophical peak through Indian philosophy (Hourani, 1984; Said, 1978).

Beginning with the transfer of the European tradition to the United States, American Orientalism was developed primarily through political and academic channels after 1945. As a result, the U.S. became a leading center in both Islamic studies and Middle

Eastern policy (Lockman, 2004; Said, 1978). It is noteworthy that the common ground between the political-academic development of American Orientalism (originating from the European tradition) and the philosophical-literary application of Plato's triad lies in defining both the intellectual and intercultural foundations of discourse about the East. This serves, as Edward Said emphasized in *Orientalism*, to explain both the intellectual and ideological frameworks through which the East is thought and spoken about.

Plato's triad of Goodness, Beauty, and Truth (Plato, trans. 2000) holds a central position in Western philosophical thought, aiming to explain human experience across ethical, aesthetic, and metaphysical dimensions. In literary studies, the application of the triad provides a method to uncover the philosophical foundations of intercultural dialogue in literary texts. Edward Said presents Orientalism not merely as an academic field but as a *discourse* through which the West determines how to speak about and think of the East. This discourse perpetuates Western political, cultural, and intellectual superiority. The East is presented as an «otherized» epistemological construct. According to Said, the romanticization and exoticization of the East by Western writers constitute a form of cultural superiority (Said, 1978/2003). This theoretical framework allows us to understand how the East is presented as «other» in the texts of Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe.

Homi Bhabha's concepts of "hybridity" and the "third space" are among the leading concepts in postcolonial theory. His approach complements Edward Said's *Orientalism* discourse and explains more subtly the intercultural dynamics of colonial relations. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha introduces the concepts of hybridity, mimicry, and third space (Bhabha, 1994/2004). According to Bhabha, intercultural encounters within colonial discourse create new hybrid forms. This theory provides a leading framework for explaining the formation of a universal humanist discourse between East and West in Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in her article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" argues that subaltern groups are deprived of voice within colonial discourse (Spivak, 1988/2010).

According to Spivak, Western intellectual discourse often distorts or renders invisible the authentic voice of the East. This perspective sharpens the analysis of the “otherization” of the East in the works of Irving and Poe. Kahlil Gibran, by contrast, attempts to restore the subaltern voice in artistic-philosophical form to the Western reader, partially reclaiming the “silenced voice” described in Spivak’s theory.

When Plato’s triad is analyzed in the works of American authors in conjunction with Edward Said’s *Orientalism* discourse and Homi Bhabha’s hybridity theory, it provides a systematic means to reveal the philosophical and literary foundations of East-West relations. In Irving’s work, the <beauty> component of the triad comes to the fore, manifesting in Said’s framework as the exoticization of the East, in Bhabha’s approach as ambivalent relations, and in Spivak’s view as the silencing of the Eastern voice. Edgar Allan Poe expresses the <truth> aspect of the triad through mystical-metaphysical quests – an approach that results in the intellectual construction of the East according to Said, the formation of hybridity phenomena according to Bhabha, and the subordination of the Eastern voice to Western metaphysics according to Spivak. Kahlil Gibran expresses the triad in its entirety, giving voice to the East in Said’s framework, forming Bhabha’s ‘third space,’ and conveying the subaltern voice to the Western audience through artistic-philosophical discourse. When analyzed together, Plato’s triad, Said’s *Orientalism*, Bhabha’s hybridity, and Spivak’s subaltern theory reveal various forms of East-West dialogue in the works of Irving, Poe, and Gibran, offering a systematic explanation of *Orientalism*’s manifestations in American literature.

In the mid-nineteenth century, literary *Orientalism* (Transcendentalism and Dark Romanticism) preceded the academic establishment of *Orientalism* in U.S. literature. In the works of Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe from this period, we encounter references to Averroes’ philosophy and examples of Andalusian Islamic culture. While Irving describes the Andalusian Renaissance in *The Tales of the Alhambra* and *The Life of Mahomet and His Successors*, discussing the intellectual milieu created by Averroes, Poe connects the *Orientalist* elements in his

works – concerning the nature of the soul, cognition, and human intellectual limits – with Latin Averroism (the idea that individuals participate in a common universal intellect, i.e., Monopsychism). Poe associated the Eastern world not only with mysticism but also with remnants of ancient rational philosophy. The primary aim of these American Romantics was to demonstrate American national independence aesthetically through the creation of a national literature. They regarded nature as a living source of knowledge and expressed faith in the intuitive power of cognition. Thus they prioritized individualism and identified truth with beauty. What distinguishes them is the embodiment of Plato’s triad principle and the idea of union with or separation from nature (Burgin, 2017, p. 161–182). Loyalty to order and proportion, respect for the “organic” form of the poetic work, and establishing the author’s priority relation between form and content were also fundamental.

To explain the relevance of American *Orientalism* in literary and cultural history, Plato’s triad principle provides a productive theoretical framework. According to this principle, every event or cultural phenomenon is formed through stages of *cause (aitia)*, *force (dynamis)*, and *result (ergon)* (Plato, trans. 2000). In the cause stage, the intellectual origin of American *Orientalism* is connected to the transfer of exoticism, mysticism, and cultural stereotypes from eighteenth–nineteenth-century Europe to U.S. literature (Said, 1978; Lockman, 2004). The force stage expresses the transformation of these influences in the American milieu through writers’ and intellectuals’ ability to adapt the European heritage to the national context. Irving’s romantic exoticism in his depictions of Andalusia (Irving, 1832/1999) and Poe’s interest in Eastern mysticism through mystical symbolism (Poe, 1845/2008) exemplify these forces. In the result stage, a distinctive *Orientalist* model emerges in U.S. literature, wherein European perceptions acquire new meaning within American culture, becoming part of both Romantic and postcolonial discourses (Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1994; Spivak, 1988). Thus, American *Orientalism* emerges not merely as a continuation of the European tradition but also as an independent intellectual outcome.

Thus, the triad principle reveals the genealogy: the cause from Europe; the intellectual force of America; and the concrete literary result. This approach aligns with both Edward Said's concept of *discourse* (Said, 1978) and Homi Bhabha's theory of *cultural hybridity* (Bhabha, 1992).

The Eastern culture that influenced Europe, particularly the period of Moorish rule in Spain and the Spanish struggle, attracted the American writer and diplomat Washington Irving. He reflected the Eastern culture of that period with great enthusiasm in his works on the subject, successfully accomplishing this challenging task with remarkable artistry.

Conclusion

American Orientalism is not merely a continuation of the European tradition

but also an independent intellectual outcome. While Washington Irving strengthened the U.S. political-ideological position by exoticizing the East and othering Muslims, Edgar Allan Poe opened universal philosophical horizons through engagement with Eastern mysticism, Sufism, and metaphysical dimensions. In contrast to these two authors, Kahlil Gibran expressed the triad in its entirety, conveying the Eastern voice to the Western audience. Therefore, the works of all three authors demonstrate that American Orientalism served both as a transformation of European perceptions and as an ideological instrument for shaping national identity. Within the framework of postcolonial theory, these writers' works on the East reveal the intellectual, aesthetic, and political dynamics of East-West relations.

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© Nuriyeva N.
Contact: nnura2563@gmail.com



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THE ROLE OF CULTURAL AWARENESS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

*Sevinc Eyvazova Arifgizi*¹, *Gulnara Aliyeva Vaqifgizi*¹,
*Subi Ganbarova Shahhin gizi*¹, *Akhundova Elnara Arifqizi*¹,
*Ahmedova Gunel Rzagulu qizi*²

¹ “Department of Foreign Languages” Senior Teacher at Azerbaijan University

² Department of Translation and Philology, Teacher at Azerbaijan University

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Abstract

This article examines the crucial role of cultural awareness in foreign language acquisition and explores how cultural competence enhances communicative effectiveness. The study argues that language learning extends beyond grammar and vocabulary to encompass understanding the cultural contexts, values, and worldviews embedded within linguistic systems. Drawing on interdisciplinary research from applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, and intercultural communication, the article analyzes the relationship between language proficiency and cultural identity.

Keywords: *cultural awareness, foreign language acquisition, intercultural competence, language identity, communicative competence, pedagogy*

Introduction

Language and culture are inextricably linked, each shaping and reflecting the other in complex ways. To learn a foreign language is not merely to acquire a new set of grammatical rules and lexical items; it is to enter into a different way of perceiving, thinking about, and interacting with the world. As Byram (1997) emphasizes, cultural awareness is an essential component of communicative competence, enabling learners to interpret and produce language appropriately within specific social and cultural contexts.

The relationship between language and culture has been a subject of scholarly inquiry for decades. Anthropologists, linguists, and educators have long recognized that language carries cultural meanings, values, and assumptions that are not always transparent to the learner. Sapir (1921) and Whorf (1956) famously argued that language influences thought and perception, suggesting that each linguistic system embodies a unique worldview. While the strong version of linguistic relativity has been contested, there is broad consensus that language and

culture are deeply intertwined and that effective language learning requires cultural understanding.

Theoretical Foundations: Language, Culture, and Identity

The relationship between language and culture can be understood from multiple theoretical perspectives. From a sociolinguistic standpoint, language is a social phenomenon that reflects and reinforces cultural norms, power relations, and social identities (Fairclough, 1989). Language choices are never neutral; they signal social position, group membership, and cultural affiliation. For language learners, understanding these social dynamics is essential for effective communication.

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory provides another important framework for understanding the link between language and culture. According to Vygotsky, language is the primary tool through which individuals internalize cultural knowledge and develop higher cognitive functions. Language learning is not an individual achievement but a socially mediated process that occurs through interaction with more knowledgeable others within specific cultural contexts. This perspective highlights the importance of authentic communication and cultural immersion in language education.

Cultural identity is another crucial dimension of the language-culture nexus. Language serves as a marker of identity, signaling who we are and where we belong (Norton, 2000). For heritage language learners, the connection between language and identity is particularly salient, as language represents a link to family, community, and cultural heritage. For foreign language learners, acquiring a new language can involve identity negotiation, as they navigate between their native cultural frameworks and those associated with the target language.

The concept of intercultural communicative competence, as developed by Byram (1997), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the cultural dimensions of language learning. Byram identifies five components of intercultural competence: knowledge of self and others, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, attitudes of curiosity and

openness, and critical cultural awareness. This framework recognizes that effective communication across cultures requires not only linguistic proficiency but also the ability to understand, respect, and mediate between different cultural perspectives.

The Role of Cultural Awareness in Language Acquisition

Cultural awareness contributes to language acquisition in multiple ways. First, it enhances linguistic competence by providing context for meaning. Many words and expressions carry cultural connotations that are not captured by dictionary definitions. For example, the English word "privacy" has cultural associations that differ significantly from its equivalents in other languages. Without cultural awareness, learners may use language in ways that are grammatically correct but pragmatically inappropriate.

Second, cultural awareness facilitates the development of pragmatic competence. Pragmatics refers to the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts, including understanding politeness norms, speech acts, and conversational conventions. These pragmatic rules are culturally specific and vary considerably across languages. Learners who lack cultural awareness may inadvertently violate pragmatic norms, leading to miscommunication or social friction.

Third, cultural awareness supports the development of sociolinguistic competence. Sociolinguistic competence involves understanding the social meanings of linguistic variation, including regional dialects, social registers, and stylistic differences. These variations reflect cultural values and social hierarchies, and learners must understand them to use language effectively in diverse contexts.

Fourth, cultural awareness contributes to learner motivation and engagement. Research has shown that learners who are interested in target culture are more likely to persist in language study and achieve higher levels of proficiency (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Cultural content makes language learning more meaningful and relevant, connecting classroom instruction to real-world contexts and experiences.

Finally, cultural awareness fosters critical thinking and self-reflection. When learners

engage with other cultures, they are challenged to examine their own cultural assumptions and worldviews. This process of reflection enhances metacognitive awareness and promotes personal growth, making language learning a transformative educational experience.

Pedagogical Approaches to Integrating Cultural Awareness

Integrating cultural awareness into language instruction requires intentional planning and a variety of pedagogical strategies. Traditional approaches often treat culture as an add-on, presenting isolated facts about holidays, food, or customs. While such information can be valuable, it does not fully capture the complexity of cultural knowledge needed for effective communication.

A more comprehensive approach integrates cultural content throughout the curriculum, connecting it to linguistic objectives and learning activities. Kramsch (1993) advocates for an approach that treats culture as a “third place” between the native and target cultures, where learners can explore cultural differences and develop intercultural understanding. This approach encourages learners to reflect critically on both their own culture and the target culture, developing the ability to mediate between them.

Authentic materials are essential for cultural awareness instruction. These can include films, literature, news media, advertisements, and social media content produced by and for speakers of the target language. Authentic materials expose learners to real language use and cultural reference, providing a window into the values, concerns, and everyday experiences of the target culture. When learners engage with authentic materials, they not only develop cultural knowledge but also practice important skills such as critical analysis and cultural interpretation.

Task-based and project-based learning offer additional opportunities for cultural aware-

ness development. These approaches engage learners in meaningful activities that require using language for real purposes, often involving interaction with native speakers or with authentic cultural materials. For example, learners might conduct interviews with members of the target culture community, research cultural topics and present their findings, or create cultural guides for other learners.

The integration of technology provides powerful tools for cultural awareness instruction. Virtual exchanges, online collaboration with peers in other countries, and access to digital cultural resources enable learners to engage directly with the target culture, even when physical travel is not possible. Social media platforms, in particular, offer opportunities for authentic cultural engagement, allowing learners to follow native speakers, participate in discussions, and experience cultural events.

Conclusion

Cultural awareness is not an optional add-on to foreign language education but a fundamental component of effective language learning and communication. Language and culture are inseparable, and learners who understand the cultural contexts of language use are better equipped to communicate authentically and appropriately. Cultural awareness contributes to linguistic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic competence, enhances learner motivation, and promotes critical thinking and personal growth.

Despite the challenges of integrating cultural awareness into language instruction, there are many practical strategies that educators can use to bring culture into their classrooms. By using authentic materials, facilitating intercultural encounters, promoting critical reflection, and creating supportive learning environments, teachers can help learners develop the cultural awareness they need to succeed as language users and intercultural communicators.

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© Eyvazova S. A., Aliyeva G. V., Ganbarova S. Sh., Akhundova E. A., Ahmedova G. R.

Contact: Sevinj.Eyvazova@au.edu.az; gulnara.aliyeva@au.edu.az; suby.ganbarova@au.edu.az; axundova.elnare@list.ru; gunel.ahmedova@au.edu.az



Section 5. Literary theory

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FROM IMPRESSIONISM TO SOCIOLOGY: THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF LITERARY CRITICISM IN THE REPUBLICAN ERA

*Khuraman Abuzar Qizi Qadimova*¹

¹ Dissertation candidate at the Institute of Oriental Studies named after
academician Ziya Bunyadov of ANAS, Doctor of Philology, Head of the
Editorial Department of the journal “Azerbaijani Oil Economy”

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Abstract

This article examines the transformation and diversification of literary criticism in Turkey during the Republican era (post-1923). It traces the evolution of critical thought from its initial struggles for legitimacy – debating its own purpose and nature – to its flowering into a complex and varied field of intellectual inquiry. The study analyzes the foundational debate on the nature of criticism between pioneers like Nurullah Ataç (who championed subjective, impressionistic criticism) and figures like Sabahattin Eyüboğlu and others who sought more objective, historical, or sociologically grounded approaches. It further explores how the socio-political climate shaped criticism, especially the rise of the National Literature movement, the ideological debates around “revolutionary literature,” and the subsequent emergence of distinct schools, including Marxist and academic criticism. By focusing on the period from 1923 to the 1950s and beyond, the article demonstrates how criticism evolved from a passionate but often polemical activity into a professionalized, multi-faceted discipline, essential for understanding and shaping the trajectory of modern Turkish literature.

Keywords: *Turkish Republican Literature, Literary Criticism, Nurullah Ataç, National Literature, Marxist Criticism, Westernization*

1. Introduction

The proclamation of the Republic in 1923 inaugurated a period of radical and top-down modernization in Turkey. The new regime, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, aimed to break sharply with the Ottoman past and

build a secular, Western-oriented, and national identity (Berkes, 1978; Karpas, 2011). This mission was a central driver for the literature and, consequently, the literary criticism of the era. The nation was now a primary theme, with writers and critics tasked not

only with creating a new literature but also with defining its purpose, form, and scope (Enginün, 2007). This article will explore how these ideological and political shifts led to the professionalization and diversification of literary criticism in the Republican era, analyzing the major figures, schools, and debates that emerged (Tural, 2006).

In the early Republican period, there was a widespread perception that genuine, Western-style literary criticism was absent in Turkey. This “lack” became a major subject of debate (Gövsä, 1935). The problem was not that there were no critical voices, but rather that criticism was often informal, personal, and lacked a clear methodology (Ataç, 1932).

Nurullah Ataç, the most prominent critic of his time, claimed that Turkish writers could not practice true criticism; they could only offer praise (*takriz*) or insults (Ataç, 1991). He argued that this was because Turkish society had not yet undergone the necessary cultural transformation to appreciate and produce proper criticism. According to Ataç, the problem was a deep-seated one: a lack of familiarity with Western aesthetic sensibilities and a tradition of assessing work based on personal relationships rather than objective criteria (Ataç, 1939).

One of the most defining features of the Republican era was the intense debate between proponents of two different critical methods: subjective/impressionistic criticism and objective/scientific criticism (Tural, 2006).

2.1. Nurullah Ataç and Impressionism

Ataç became the champion of impressionistic criticism. He argued that a critic is essentially an artist, and their primary function is to express their personal impressions and feelings about a work of art (Ataç, 1922). For Ataç, the critic cannot be objective; they are inherently subjective, and this is a strength, not a weakness. As he noted, a critic’s passion and personality are what make their writing compelling (Ataç, 1938a). He celebrated the idea that criticism is the “view of works and writers through a temperament.” He was not afraid to use his power as a critic to champion new artists, like the “Garip” movement led by Orhan Veli, and to challenge established literary figures. He saw the critic’s role not as

a scientist dissecting a text, but as a creative writer building an essay on the pleasures and challenges of reading (Ataç, 1953).

2.2. The Quest for Objectivity

Opponents of the impressionistic school, including figures like Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, wanted to move beyond personal taste. Eyüboğlu, drawing on the French critic Hippolyte Taine, argued that a critic’s first duty is to understand the work, not just to feel it. “Understanding,” he wrote, “is not feeling, loving, liking, or being excited,” but “the work of reason, performed with cold-bloodedness, not with emotion” (Eyüboğlu, 1982, p. 29). For these writers, criticism was an intellectual act, and the critic must be a knowledgeable guide (Burian, 1936).

On one side were critics like Alaattin Gövsä, who complained that a “critical spirit” was missing (Gövsä, 1935), and Mehmet Kaplan, who demanded a more scholarly and informed approach. Kaplan argued that the lack of good criticism stemmed from an environment of passivity and a lack of intellectual courage (Kaplan, 1946). He insisted on three essentials for the development of criticism: familiarity with the subject, a sense of duty to judge works fairly, and intellectual freedom (Kaplan, 1948). This ongoing debate between the impressionist and the scientific or academic critics dominated the Turkish critical landscape for decades.

Criticism was never politically neutral. The Republican ideology profoundly shaped what was written and valued. The **National Literature** movement, which had begun in the final years of the empire, continued to exert a powerful influence (Ercilasun, 1995). Its principles included the simplification of the language, the adoption of the syllabic meter, and the exploration of themes related to Anatolia and the Turkish people. Critics like Ali Canip and Ziya Gökalp argued that a genuinely national literature was essential for the survival of the nation-state (Gökalp, 2018).

Later, with the rise of the **Köy Enstitüleri** (Village Institutes) in the 1940s and the increased influence of socialist ideas, a new branch of criticism emerged: Marxist and socialist realist criticism (Moran, 2002). Critics like Fethi Naci and Asım Bezirci analyzed literature through a class-based lens,

evaluating works by their representation of social reality, their critique of capitalism, and their advocacy for the oppressed peasantry and working class (Bezirci, 1983; Naci, 1986). They were highly critical of impressionistic criticism, like that of Ataç, which they saw as individualist and a-political (Bezirci, 2003). This led to bitter disputes and a politically charged atmosphere in the literary world. The debate wasn't just a matter of taste; it was a battle over the role of literature and the critic in the future of the country.

The development of universities and the professionalization of literary studies gave rise to a more formalized, academic tradition of criticism. While figures like Fuad Köprülü had been instrumental in establishing a historical and sociological methodology for studying literature (Köprülü, 1926), the new school of academic critics, led by figures like **Mehmet Kaplan**, pushed further.

Kaplan, in particular, argued for a rigorous, text-centered analysis that was more concerned with understanding the literary work on its own terms than with making moral or political judgments. He was influenced by Western literary theories, including the "New Criticism," and his work, such as his analysis of Yahya Kemal's poetry, was a departure from the polemical and personal style of critics like Ataç (Kaplan, 1949). He emphasized the inherent formal and aesthetic qualities of the work. Another key figure was **Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar**, who, as

a novelist and intellectual, also functioned as a sophisticated critic and literary historian. He was deeply concerned with the cultural dilemma of Turkey, caught between Eastern and Western traditions, and his critical essays often explored these broader cultural and historical pressures (Tanpınar, 1969; Dellaloğlu, 2013).

Conclusion

The Republican era witnessed the full institutionalization and diversification of literary criticism in Turkey. It moved from being a passionate, often personal, and sometimes formless activity into a mature and complex discipline (Tural, 2006). The debates of this period were not just about the techniques of criticism but also about the very soul of the nation and its literature.

The struggle between impressionistic and objective criticism, the rise of a politically engaged Marxist criticism, and the development of a more detached, "scientific" academic criticism all contributed to a rich and contentious intellectual environment (Moran, 2012). Critics like Nurullah Ataç, Mehmet Kaplan, and Fethi Naci, despite their profound disagreements, collectively defined the parameters of modern Turkish literary criticism. In doing so, they helped shape the literature itself by guiding readers and challenging writers, thereby becoming central participants in the enduring project of defining the Republic's cultural identity (Hece Dergisi, 2003).

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Contact: xuramanqedimova@mail.ru

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